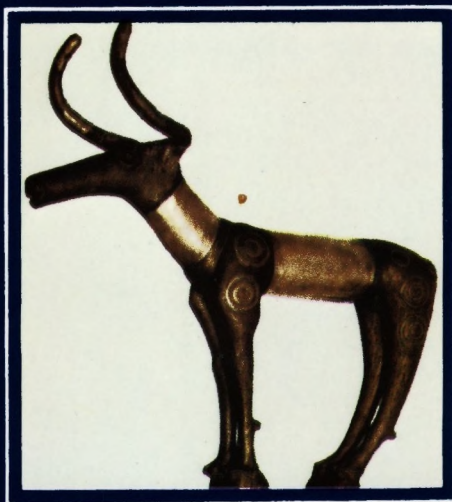


# Ancient Civilisations of East and West



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# *Ancient Civilisations of East and West*

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# Contents

---

## *Preface*

---

7

## Introduction

---

9

## *Part I*

---

### *The Primitive Epoch*

---

19

## *Part II*

---

### *Ancient Civilisations of the East*

---

40

Chapter 1. Ancient Egypt: History and Culture	40
Chapter 2. The Ancient States of Mesopotamia	52
Chapter 3. Asia Minor in Ancient Times	79
Chapter 4. The Ancient States of Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and the Arabian Peninsula	84

Chapter 5. Transcaucasia in Antiquity	89
Chapter 6. Scythians and Their Culture	102
Chapter 7. The Civilisation of Ancient Iran	113
Chapter 8. Western Central Asia in Antiquity	137
Chapter 9. The Old Indian Civilisation	147
Chapter 10. Ancient China: History and Culture	172

## *Part III*

---

### *The Graeco-Roman World*

---

196

Chapter 11. Early Greece	196
Chapter 12. Archaic Greece	203
Chapter 13. Classical Greece	213
Chapter 14. The Epoch of Hellenism	236

Chapter 15. From the Origin of Rome to the Unification of Italy	267
Chapter 16. The Rise of the Roman Empire. The Crisis of the Republic	281
Chapter 17. The Roman Empire	307

## *Afterword*

---

332

## *Name Index*

---

337



## *Preface*

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In these days, when the problem of maintaining peace and preserving the cultural values accumulated by humankind is particularly acute, and a frank and fruitful dialogue between East and West is particularly necessary, the question of the people's cultural heritage and the assessment of the contribution of the ancient civilisations of East and West to world culture assume a great scientific and socio-political significance.

The present work, written by leading Soviet specialists in Occidental and Oriental antiquity, is intended to outline the principal stages in the historical-cultural development of the ancient societies of East and West.

Consideration of the ancient cultures of East and West within a single framework reflects the objective unity of the historical process, revealing a lack of true historicity in theories with a European or Oriental bias.

In recent years, fresh and extremely valuable materials have become available which enable us to read those chapters of mankind's historical chronicle which have so far appeared mysterious. Old concepts and well-established views are revised, new methods of historical analysis are worked out, and studies of interdisciplinary nature gain ground.

Soviet scholars have achieved, especially in the last two decades, considerable successes in the study of ancient civilisations.

One should first of all mention the discovery of previously unknown, strikingly original cultures in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Important scientific results have also been obtained by joint expeditions of Soviet archaeologists and those of Mongolia, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Yemen. Joint research projects of Soviet and Indian scholars have also been extremely fruitful.

The foundations of many achievements in material and nonmaterial culture, which made an impact on the subsequent development of world civilisation, were laid in antiquity. Cereals were cultivated, animals domesticated, and metals smelted; writing, and verbal and other arts emerged; cities were built; and classes and the state came into being. The achievements of Graeco-Roman and Oriental culture became part of the treasure-house of human civilisation.

In recent years, the great role of the ancient cultures of Africa and South America in the overall development of human civilisation has become increasingly apparent. Unfortunately, there are very few monuments, especially written monuments, of

these remote epochs, which explains the absence of special chapters on the cultures of these regions in the present work.

It is to be hoped that the publication of this book in English, with its sumptuous illustrations (mostly of monuments from the museums of the USSR), will be of interest to readers of many countries of the world and will help Soviet historians to consolidate

their international links. Imbued with the ideas of humanism and the spirit of profound respect for all the peoples of the world, presenting the development of world history in an objective manner and rejecting unscientific, biased and chauvinistic tendencies, it will undoubtedly serve the noble goals of strengthening peace and social progress and bringing the peoples of the world closer together.

Academician Sergei Tikhvinsky,  
Chairman of the USSR National  
Committee of Historians



## *Introduction*

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Modern historical science, just as many other areas of knowledge, is developing at a very fast rate. Certain problems have to be reinterpreted in a new light, and numerous facts which have seemed to be firmly established now need to be verified. The history of antiquity is a case in point. New archaeological discoveries and the finding of hitherto unknown written monuments are changing existing notions of the history of ancient societies of East and West, promoting a better understanding of the political, social and cultural development of these ancient fountain-heads of human civilisation.

Premises have thus emerged for alternative approaches to the history of ancient civilisations of East and West. The present book, written by leading Soviet specialists in history, archaeology and cultural history working at the USSR Academy of Sciences, takes precisely such an approach.

In doing so, the authors endeavoured to cover an immense historical period—from the origin of mankind to the epoch of feudalism.

The first part of the book deals with the history of primitive society. That is the longest of all historical periods, stretching from the origin of man to the decline of primitive communal relations and the emergence of class society and the state. The discoveries of the last few decades in East Africa have pushed the sources of human civilisation far into antiquity—by several millions of years, according to the modern view. The rise of man from the animal world and the emergence of human society is a most complex process, in which labour played the decisive role. Engels's remarkable proposition, "Labour made man", is much better substantiated now, after

many decades of studies by scholars in the most diverse fields, than it was at the time of its formulation.

In the early stages of the development of the primitive communal system, defined as the Old Stone Age, or the Palaeolithic, man used the most primitive tools, which were gradually improved in the struggle against the harsh environment. The New Stone Age, referred to as the Neolithic Revolution by some researchers, was a most significant stage in the evolution of primitive society. It involved the transition from the foraging, hunting and fishing economies, to the productive economy, marked by land cultivation, stock-breeding, and the crafts. For the first time in history, human communities were able to produce and store foodstuffs necessary for subsistence over long periods and could thus settle down for long stretches of time in one place, ultimately building permanent settlements. Considerable surplus product enabled some individuals in a group to concentrate on activities other than food production. As production developed, the social structure and the system of society control grew in complexity. These processes led to a most important landmark in the history of mankind, the emergence of private property and the state.

The first antagonistic social formation and the state were brought about, above all, by socio-economic factors, namely, a regularly obtained surplus product and the possibility of its redistribution. The former was ensured by the mode of economic activity existing at the time, with irrigation in arid areas proving particularly effective.

Simultaneously, society evolved a complex of

remarkable cultural phenomena known in their totality as civilisation. Intrinsically, the first civilisations were marked by the emergence of early class society and the state, while their most striking external features were writing, city centres and monumental architecture.

The process of class formation was deeply rooted in the primitive communal structure; in its earliest stages, that process assumed a latent form, as it were. In the context of changing social relations, alienation of the surplus product often retained the traditional external forms of the primitive communal mode of life. Thus, relying on ancient custom, chiefs made the brothers of their numerous wives give up part of their crops and till their land. This rule was gradually extended to all the the tribesmen of the chief's wives. Later, communal lands were seized directly. The social structure of primitive communal society in the latter stages of its development already presented a rather complex picture. There was a whole series of social groups here essentially differing in their economic and social status. The supreme chief's clan (the "royal clan") formed the apex of the social pyramid, with the next rung of the ladder occupied by a number of "noble clans".

This was, in fact, a forerunner of the class structure of society, new in content though traditional in form. Gradual adaptation of traditional customs to the new situation developed into direct exploitation, of which the initial forms were the exploitation of tributaries and slaves. The paying of tribute, which was a form of subordination of one ethnic group to another, developed with the growth of inter-tribal conflicts. The archaic legal forms within which initial exploitation took place underwent a gradual transformation as a result of which the slave became the main object of exploitation.

The starting point of slave-owning proper was the exploitation of prisoners of war treated as junior household members. As production and socioeconomic relations grew in complexity, enslavement of insolvent debtors gradually became normal. A characteristic feature of early historical development leading to the formation of civilisation, mankind's outstanding achievement, was the rise of class antagonisms and concentration of enormous wealth in the hands of certain social strata and even individuals.

As classes evolved, power was increasingly institu-

tionalised and segregated. Gradually, the chief monopolised the right of product distribution, his power thus being extended to cover economic functions. The segregation of power was accompanied by and culminated in the formation of the state.

Traditional ideological forms were also adapted to the new social structure. Of the greatest significance was the assertion of the cult of chieftain or king, which was made the basis of the new power that had established itself in society—the state. This process began at the later stages of primitive society; the position and functions of the chieftain became sacred, specific attributes of his power appeared, and his cult in this and the afterlife developed.

At the same time, these processes (and this should be constantly borne in mind) were merely a general tendency, the main line in the development of ancient societies. The evolution of each individual society could be complicated and contradictory, since uneven development is a most characteristic feature of the historical process, marked by interruptions and even regressions in the overall progressive movement. The present volume mainly deals with the history of the ancient civilisations of the Old World from the emergence of the first states to the downfall of the Roman Empire in the 5th century A.D., generally recognised as the boundary between antiquity and the Middle Ages. This period, the longest in mankind's history, is traditionally divided into the history of the ancient East, and the history of ancient Greece and Rome.

The history of ancient civilisations is one of complex interaction between the first state structures. Emerging through spontaneous internal development, the first states later made an increasing impact on the surrounding peoples living under the primitive communal structure. The combined effect of the two factors—of inner development and the influence of the more developed societies—accelerated the transition of many peoples to class society. The ancient civilisations traversed the path from the first fountainheads in the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Hindus, and the Hwang Ho to an enormous belt stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

In the early stages, the East outstripped the West in its economic and cultural development. It was precisely in the East that the earliest civilisations and the first states known to history emerged some five



thousand years ago. Between the 6th and 3rd millennia B.C., the incessant toil of many generations of the fruitful valleys of the Nile, the Tigris, and the Euphrates brought into being the irrigation systems of Egypt and southern Mesopotamia. Somewhat later, such systems were built in India and China. This great victory of man over the forces of nature permitted rapid development of the economy. Man proceeded from food-gathering and hunting to intensive land cultivation, achieving more or less stable crops of cereals. Stone tools were replaced by the more effective labour implements made of copper and later of bronze and iron. As a result, large-scale land cultivation and forest clearing became possible. Simultaneously, stock-breeding on the basis of a settled way of life developed. A surplus of agricultural products enabled a certain portion of the population to engage in the crafts. Another great division of labour thus took place, namely, the separation of the crafts from agriculture.

As a result of intense development of productive forces, labour began to yield a surplus product in excess of what was necessary for the producers' subsistence. Instead of physical labour, some individuals could now concentrate on organising production and on managerial functions in large-scale economic units then arising. For the first time in the long history of human society, the employment of other people's labour in production became possible and profitable, which led to the emergence of slave-owning. Originally, slaves were former prisoners of war, but as relations within the clan decayed, the degradation of formerly full-fledged members of society, impoverished due to crop failure, natural disaster or other causes, ended in their enslavement for their debts. Thus, side by side with slaves, still more numerous groups of formally free individuals appeared who, having lost their land, had to work for the king or the temple in return for subsistence rations.

Slaves and similar socioeconomic groups were confronted by the ruling class which consisted of the king's retinue, the higher military ranks, the higher priests, and the elders of agricultural communes. To keep slaves and other exploited groups of the population in subordination, the state apparatus of coercion was created.

As Frederick Engels wrote, a situation arose when "only one thing was missing: ... an institution that would perpetuate, not only the newly-rising class

division of society, but also the right of the possessing class to exploit the non-possessing classes and the rule of the former over the latter. And this institution arrived. The *state* was invented."<sup>1</sup>

A characteristic feature of the ancient East was the great diversity of socioeconomic structures. Still, certain regular features can be discerned in this diversity. Thus in the 3rd and early 2nd millennia B.C. the king's domain, or the state economy, figured prominently in the overall economic structure in the Middle East. The state, personified by the king, was the owner of immense land property and artisans' workshops. The labour force on royal estates primarily consisted of persons dependent on the state, whose status was intermediate between that of freemen and slaves. Unlike private estates, the royal domain almost never used slave labour in those times. In the 2nd and 1st millennia B.C., the leading role in the economy was played by private and temple estates, employing slave labour on a fairly wide scale. However, a most significant feature of the East was the important role played by the labour of free commoners and tenants throughout the ancient period.

The numerous class of freemen which existed in the Orient endeavoured to defend its rights and privileges in an organised way. Throughout the ancient history of Mesopotamia, the popular assembly of free citizens functioned as an organ of local self-government, often competing with the king's authority and attempting to restrict it.

The situation was different in Egypt, where the state sector retained its positions for nearly two thousand years, the popular assembly was as good as nonexistent, and most of the population had no civil rights. Thus different types of social structure existed in different countries, ranging from democratic institutions to despotic royal power. In one and the same country, too, the character of power and of the social structure often changed with time.

Despite this diversity of types of state power and of socioeconomic order, certain unifying features are apparent in the historical development of ancient societies. The main such feature was the existence of the class of slave-owners in each ancient society vis-

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, "The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State," in *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1970, p. 275.

à-vis the class of slaves possessing no means or implements of production and owned by members of the former class, as well as of various semi-dependent strata whose socioeconomic position was not unlike that of slaves.

Ancient societies also had broadly similar ideologies, with certain prominent common traits.

Religion dominated ancient ideology, inculcating in the minds of the people the need for worshipping the gods, observing certain moral norms and performing certain duties associated with the social status of the individuals. An important feature of ancient cults (before the emergence of the world religions) was their tolerance towards the beliefs of other peoples.

The development of socioeconomic relations in the ancient East was naturally accompanied by progress in material and nonmaterial cultures. The principal cereals were cultivated for the first time in the ancient Orient; animals were also domesticated and metals brought into use here. All of this created a basis for further advances of human civilisation. Many achievements of the ancient Oriental peoples are still alive; numerous traditions of culture (literature, the theatre, art, etc.) have survived from the epoch of antiquity to the present times, forming part of the world culture. Ancient systems of writing emerged in Egypt and Mesopotamia independently of each other as early as the 3rd millennium B.C. Owing to the continuity of the historical tradition, the great achievements of Babylonian mathematical astronomy, Egyptian medicine, and many other outstanding results of ancient Oriental science and art have been preserved. The study of the languages, writing systems, material culture, science, literature and art of the ancient Oriental peoples has considerably extended the cultural horizons of modern man. It should be noted that studies of the ancient Orient date from comparatively recent times, when Egyptian hieroglyphics and Sumero-Akkadian cuneiform writing were deciphered in the 19th century. This branch of science has been rapidly developing ever since. At present, it is firmly founded on an enormous number of written and material monuments. However, in these days, too, archaeological excavations yield thousands of new texts literally every year, extending our knowledge of ancient Oriental civilisations.

There is a long solid tradition of the study of the

ancient East, its history and culture in the USSR. Investigation of the socioeconomic relations in the overall process of historical development has figured especially prominently in this tradition, but the culture, literature, religion and art of the ancient Oriental peoples have also been studied quite thoroughly. Such outstanding Russian and Soviet scholars as B. A. Turayev, V. S. Golenishchev, V. V. Struve, M. A. Korostovtsev, T. V. Gamkrelidze and I. M. Dyakonov have made a great contribution to the study of the ancient Orient. The discoveries of Soviet archaeologists in the recent decades have inspired new interpretations for many aspects of the history of the ancient civilisations of Transcaucasia and Transcaspiian Central Asia; the great role of the peoples of these regions in antiquity and the extent of their contribution to mankind's total culture have been firmly established.

Relying on Marxist-Leninist methodology, Soviet specialists in the ancient Orient inquire into the basic problems of the historical-cultural development of the Oriental peoples, analysing the formation of the state, social structure, economic relations, ideology and culture.

In our view, the study of the ancient East is not only of great scholarly significance: knowledge of the ancient Oriental culture is part and parcel of modern man's general treasury of knowledge.

Objective investigation of the ancient Oriental civilisations shows the unity of the world historical process, revealing the fallacy of the views, disseminated by conservative and nationalistic scholars, concerning the absolute opposition of East and West, the specifically spiritual character of the ancient Oriental culture, the division of peoples into civilised and backward ones, etc. Attempts to modernise the ancient history of the East and the cultural heritage of its peoples appear just as unscientific in the light of such objective inquiry.

The countries of the Western ancient world emerged and developed under conditions somewhat different from those of the ancient Oriental states.

First, unlike the early Oriental countries, they were not islands in the midst of an immense mass of primitive peoples. The world of antiquity emerged on the historical scene at a time when a massive enclave of highly civilised societies, capable of effectively opposing the primitive neighbours, had become consolidated.

Second, while the first Oriental civilisations evolved almost independently, without any external influences, the peoples of the Western world, as latest research shows more and more clearly, were greatly indebted to the more ancient civilisations. The first class societies on the territory of Greece appeared at the end of the 3rd millennium B. C. In the 2nd millennium B. C., states emerged on Crete and in continental Greece which kept up close contacts with the more ancient civilisations of the East; the social structure of these societies was similar to that of the Near Eastern states. Owing to their extensive links with the entire Mediterranean area, the states of Crete and Mycenae made a great contribution to the development not only of Greece but also of Italy. Phoenicians, and after their decline, their successors, the Carthaginians, played an enormous role in those times.

Third, the peoples of the Graeco-Roman world were already familiar with the production of iron, which they used to manufacture both weapons and labour tools. This facilitated a rapid development of productive forces and permitted the combination of surviving consanguineal and rural communities with the private economy of extended and, later, basic families. No strong centralised authority or ramified bureaucratic network, which in the East coordinated the joint efforts of rural communities in carrying out labour-consuming projects in the absence of well-developed productive forces, were needed in the West. Here, royal power was replaced by aristocratic republics at the very dawn of the Graeco-Roman world.

Improvements in the implements of production and the development of navigation boosted the handicrafts, increasing the importance of internal and external exchange and finally resulting in the appearance of money as a universal equivalent. A considerable portion of the population was now engaged not only in agriculture and the crafts but also in commerce and later in financial operations. Rural settlements were united in cities, which became unifying centres for the neighbourhood landowners as well as for the crafts, commerce, and cults. During wars, they served as a refuge for the population of the environs. The emergence of such urban communities was one of the mainsprings for the further development of the antique world.

As preclass society decayed, that development ini-

tially went on along approximately the same lines as in the neighbouring tribes and peoples. Clan and tribal nobility evolved as a group producing most of the military leaders, priests, elders in the councils, and judges. This group possessed considerable movable properties and the common lands which its members had seized. On the other hand, an increasing number of rank-and-file tribesmen became impoverished and dependent on the nobility, enslaved for their debts or obliged to give up most of their crops to the landowners from whom they leased their plots. On this basis, states of the ancient Oriental type might have later arisen, but that line of development was cut short by the struggle and victory of the people—the Greek demos and Roman plebs—over the tribal nobility. The fight was long and hard but it ended in the establishment, for the first time in the history of mankind, of democracy, which found its most consummate expression in Athens and, to a lesser extent, in Rome. This development is a most striking and graphic illustration of the role of the people's masses in the historical process which in this case was directed along a path that was unique in the ancient world.

Despite the class limitations of this type of democracy, it conditioned the formation of the civic community which determined the antique world's history and culture. It was, first and foremost, a community of landowners whose land allotments might be large or small but whose rights to these allotments were equal. Apart from the private holdings, there were public lands belonging to the entire city community to be used at the latter's discretion—cultivated on behalf of the whole community, set aside for raising public buildings on, leased, or divided into lots handed over to individual citizens. The community as a whole exercised supreme control over its entire territory.

The civic community provided the means of subsistence, at least in principle, to all its members—in the first place by giving them land allotments, by setting the upper limit on holdings and distributing the excess among the have-nots or by conquering new lands and establishing colonies. Other methods were also employed. The enslavement of a free citizen was forbidden and limitations were introduced on enslavement for debts, supported by legislative restrictions on usurious interest rates. Corporal punishment could not be inflicted on a citizen,



and he could not be executed without the popular assembly's sanction. His links with the civic community and its organs of authority were direct and not mediated, as in other societies, by his membership in a rural community or personal links with an individual of a superior status in the social hierarchy. The popular assembly was the supreme organ. It approved laws, it was the highest court of appeal, and it decided the issues of war and peace. The need to provide the means of subsistence for each citizen (the propertied citizens in the first place) determined Greece's colonial expansion and the exploitation of the less significant allies by the stronger polises, and in Rome, the endless wars for booty and lands on which colonies were also set up. Colonisation, both Greek and Roman, brought about the proliferation of civic communities which were, to some extent, replicas of the home cities; conditions were thus created for the spreading of the antique slave-owning mode of production and Graeco-Roman culture over considerable territories adjoining the Black and the Mediterranean seas.

The specific features of the social organisation mentioned above restricted the possibilities for exploiting fellow-citizens. The only practical source of labour for the gradually multiplying large estates and artisans' workshops was exploitation of slaves who were completely and absolutely owned by their masters and had no legal rights at all, being outside all institutions of civic society. Greece, Rome, and other antique civic communities created after their model, were slave-owning communities *par excellence*: although there were slaves in other societies of the ancient world as well, production in these societies could also proceed through exploitation of other categories of the population at various stages of dependence. As for the antique world in its classical period, no large estate or workshop could do without slave labour.

The political and legal equality of citizens and complete lack of rights for the slaves determined a sharp differentiation and crystallisation of the concepts of slavery and freedom in the social ethics, unknown in other ancient societies with their extensive spectrum of states intermediate between slaves and freemen. Freedom became one of the fundamental concepts in the system of values of the antique civic community – be it the freedom of the native city or of an individual citizen. Freedom was perceived as the

highest value. For the free man of the antique world, enslavement was a misfortune more terrible than death itself. The idea of freedom was closely linked with that of economic independence. A city was free when it paid no taxes to anyone and had no obligations before anyone. A man was completely free when he worked on his own holding. A free citizen possessed a number of obligatory virtues which distinguished him, in his view, from the slave. A citizen had to express his opinions freely, he had to be courageous, hardy, reserved, true to his word, and conscious of his duties to the gods, the ancestors, the family, and the native land. This opposition between “civic virtues” and “slavish vices” determined the ethics of the antique world, reflecting the profound class contradictions between slaves and their owners.

Another important foundation of antique ethics was the concept of “the common good” inseparable from the good for each member of the civic collective. A citizen of a free, strong and rich city was himself free, rich, and respected everywhere. Conversely, the richer and more dutiful the citizens, the more powerful and glorious their city. The ideology and culture of the antique world largely grew on this ethics.

Although religion, observance of established rites, and various methods for divining the gods' will and bringing one's actions in accord with them played an immense role in the life of the civic community as a whole and that of the individual entities, clans, families, and persons, they were a binding principle rather than the source of morality.

Before the crisis of all the institutions of antiquity set in, men did not expect either reward or punishment for their good or bad deeds either in this world or the next. The source of reward and punishment, respect and disgrace, was the judgement of fellow-citizens. Slavery and subjugation of other peoples were justified by religion on the grounds that men incapable of governing themselves and of making use of their freedom must obey others.

Society was perceived as created by the people led by wise and farsighted leaders, not by gods; and as an organism where each free member was believed to perform his intended function for the good of the whole. That whole, in its turn, was part of a still greater unity, the cosmos, where gods, men, beasts, plants, lands, heavenly bodies, in short, everything that is, were interconnected and governed by a sin-

gle law established by the gods for nature, and by men for the human communities.

The desire to cognise the laws of both cosmos and society in order to teach men to obey them and to find unity and happiness in this obedience stimulated the development of the sciences of the natural world and of the social order. The sciences were interwoven with philosophy, the various philosophical schools assimilating the experiences accumulated by mathematics, astronomy, natural science, history, and ethnography.

Non-religious ethics accorded with the absence of an obligatory religious dogma, which was in part explained by the secular nature of the state power represented by elected councillors and not by a king, and in part by the general incompatibility of an obligatory dogma with the right to free thought, which distinguished the citizen from the slave. Freedom from obligatory dogmas combined with lively political struggles between different political groupings whose representatives had to be skilful enough to persuade and win over the popular assembly, the council, the judges, developed the ability for logically proving one's views. Logic became the principal method not only in rhetoric but also in philosophy and the sciences, to the detriment of the methods of observations and experiment.

Apart from logic, the orator, the philosopher, and the politician had to master a certain amount of knowledge in various fields which guided him in his actions and speeches, providing convincing examples for the latter. This was one of the factors in the general rise of education. Since, in antiquity, each citizen was at the same time a warrior, he built up his body from adolescence, practising various physical exercises. To be able to participate in mass religious rites, he had to study the art of music and singing. All this shaped the famous ideal of a harmoniously developed individual who had equal mastery over his body and mind. The belief that it was men and not gods who created the society they lived in engendered a special interest in the human personality and human psychology.

The antique world went through nearly fifteen hundred years of historical development in which many features of the classical period of efflorescence of the antique civic community were modified, gradually turning into their own opposites. Little by little, the Hellenistic kingdoms and the Roman

Empire changed the psychology of the citizen to that of a subject. The more theocratic the power of Hellenistic kings, and later of Roman emperors, became, the greater was the role of religion, which rose in the hierarchy of values as a source of morality, and the greater was the ideological pressure from above.

Despite the class limitations of antique democracy, despite slavery and predatory wars, the antique civilisation bequeathed to the later generations, along with other historical experiences, the ideas of the people's sovereignty, of citizens' freedom and equality, of each citizen's right to guaranteed existence and his duty to serve the country, respect for justice, desire for free cognition of nature and society, and respect for the human individual and for art presenting man as he is, and as he can and must be.

Hence the intransient interest for the antique world and its heritage.

The antique civilisation developed in close contact with the surrounding world. In the 1st millennium B. C., after the gap of the so-called Dark Ages, links were resumed with the Orient, and antique colonisation greatly increased the area of contacts with a great number of peoples inhabiting the Mediterranean and Black Sea coast. The originality of the antique civilisation is beyond doubt, but the influences of the Oriental peoples on the formation of Western culture must not be underestimated. Thus, throughout the 1st millennium B. C., a remarkable situation prevailed on the Italian peninsula where intense interaction between the cultures of Latins, Etruscans and Greeks moulded the Roman civilisation.

Of fundamental significance was the Hellenistic epoch which brought into being extensive areas of interaction between the ancient local cultures and the culture of the invading Hellenes. The interaction and mutual influence of these civilisations were extremely fruitful, enriching the cultures of all the peoples of the Hellenistic world.

Under the Roman Empire, the Mediterranean area went through a process of cultural unification combined with increasing Oriental influences, particularly in ideology. In that period, cultural links with India and China were established.

The downfall of the Graeco-Roman world led to a considerable weakening of cultural links between

the peoples of different regions.

The decline of antique society was predetermined by class contradictions. The Roman Empire grew out of a system of civic communities united under Rome's aegis. Gradually, the empire created its own ruling elite, its own system of coercive state control existing at the expense of the civic communities, and this sharply increased the rate of exploitation, first of slave labour and later of the labour of free citizens. The working people had to support the privileged strata and the entire enormous superstructure of the imperial state machine. As a result, free producers were reduced to a state of near slavery, while the position of slaves deteriorated in the extreme. This increased the resistance of the oppressed classes; to suppress it, the coercive apparatus had to be built up, and this in its turn demanded harsher exploitation to obtain the wherewithall. This vicious circle could not be broken under the existing social relations.

This situation naturally led to a decrease in the share of surplus product and a regress in economic development. Attempts to overcome the crisis resulted in the emergence of feudal-type relations in the framework of the Roman empire, which further aggravated the economic and political decline of this last of the ancient civilisations, which finally collapsed, overrun by the "barbarians".

The Middle Ages rejected the cultural heritage of antiquity, and only in the epoch of the Renaissance did the interest for the history and culture of Greece and Rome emerge. Believing themselves to be the spiritual heirs of the antique world, the humanists of the Renaissance spent a great deal of time and effort collecting, studying and publishing the works of antique authors. The next stage in the study of the history of antiquity was linked with the work of the scholars of the Enlightenment, who characteristically endeavoured to interpret antiquity as an element in the overall picture of the history of mankind rather than an accidental phenomenon of history. That line was continued by the progressive scholars of the first half of the 19th century. The greatest impact on the historical thinking of those times was made by the ideas of Hegel who saw history as a law-governed process going through a series of stages. In Hegel's view, antiquity was the period of mankind's beautiful youth (ancient Greece) and maturity (Rome).

The end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th were marked by a sharp increase in the interest for the economic and social history of antiquity. It was at that time that two trends in the interpretation of antique society, the "primitivists" and the "modernists", engaged in their largely fruitful controversy.

Modern historiography of antiquity is characterised, above all, by a profound interest for source studies. Sophisticated methods of source analysis, extensive use of the data of epigraphics and papyrology, complementing available sources with numismatic and archaeological materials, with due consideration for their specificity, are the most characteristic features of the modern approach to the study of antiquity. Most modern researchers reject a priori schemes, subscribing to the theory of specificity of antique society interpreted as a unique and original phenomenon.

Agrarian relations in Greece and Rome, critical periods and revolutionary movements in their history, were subjects of the greatest interest to Russian scholars of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The interest for these themes was motivated by problems that were of the greatest concern for the public at the time. They were dealt with in the works of T. N. Granovsky, S. V. Yeshevsky, I. V. Netushil, R. Yu. Vipper, M. I. Rostovtzeff. The epigraphists F. F. Sokolov and V. V. Latyshev and the archaeologist B. V. Farmakovsky also made outstanding contributions to historical science.

After the 1917 October Revolution, Soviet historians continued the progressive traditions of Russian historiography. They also tackled new problems, undertaking in-depth studies of socioeconomic relations, forms of exploitation, class struggle, the crisis of the polis, the nature of the transition from the republic to the empire in Rome, from the principate to the dominate, and from antique to feudal society, as well as the ideology, literature, art and material culture of various epochs, classes and social strata. A great contribution to the study of these problems was made by such Soviet scholars as S. A. Zhebelev, V. S. Sergeyev, A. V. Mishulin, N. A. Mashkin, S. L. Utchenko, A. I. Tyumenev, K. M. Kolobova, V. D. Blavatsky. Similar problems, with a special stress on the Roman provinces, are studied by specialists in antiquity from the other socialist countries.

The works of Marx, Engels and Lenin provide the guidelines for the development of Soviet historiography. Marx and Engels were outstanding researchers and experts in antique, and in particular, Roman, history. In his *Economic Manuscripts*, and especially in the chapter on "The Forms Preceding Capitalist Production", Marx described the nature of the antique urban community as a special type of community that determined the main characteristic features of the antique world and its later evolution. In his other works Marx often turned to the economy of antique societies, showing their differences from the capitalist economy. Engels wrote such fundamental works, directly bearing on ancient history, as *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, *Bruno Bauer und das Urchristentum*, and *Zur Geschichte des Urchristentums*. Marx and Engels's general theoretical views concerning the unity of the historical process and the succession of socioeconomic formations, and their approach developed by Lenin, to the correlation and mutual influence of the socioeconomic basis and the political and ideological superstructure, provide a basis for the research by scholars of the USSR and other socialist countries in the history of the ancient Orient and of Graeco-Roman antiquity.

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The history of the ancient civilisations of East and West is part and parcel of world history, it is an important and extremely interesting chapter in the chronicle of human civilisation. The study of this epoch is of great scientific value, as it helps to understand the basic laws of the historical process and to evaluate the contribution of the Oriental and Occidental peoples to world civilisation.

But the study of the history of the ancient Orient and of antiquity is not of academic interest only. The knowledge of the cultural heritage of the peoples of that epoch is of intransigent cognitive significance; their highest achievements in literature, art and philosophy are still part of the humanist moral and esthetic education and of the spiritual values of the present epoch. They serve as a source of inspiration for contemporary artists, who study their craftsmanship and delight in the true masterpieces of the human genius.

The present cannot be understood without a deep knowledge of the past, and that is especially true of

those aspects of human civilisation where ancient traditions, modified and modernised, become organic elements of modern life. For example, we find a direct continuity of cultural development in certain Oriental countries; here, a world outlook that goes back to ancient civilisations still retains immense influence. Many monuments of literature, of epic and other types of folklore created hundreds and even thousands of years ago are not only part of the cultural heritage but also a living reality, perceived as inalienably connected with the development of modern culture. Ancient civilisations were also the source of many social institutions which still function in our times, though in a thoroughly modified form.

The historical and cultural experiences of the past still retain their significance, although each epoch and even each scientific trend evaluates and interprets past events in its own way.

The study of ancient civilisations of East and West is distinctly topical, as problems of cultural heritage are now the theme of lively public debate.

Taking this into account, the authors of the present work – historians and archaeologists specialising in various regions of the ancient Orient and of classical antiquity – endeavoured to use the latest scientific findings in introducing the broad readership to the cultural attainments of the ancient peoples of the East and of Greece and Italy, and to the most important facts of their political and cultural history in the context of the general historical process of mankind's progressive development.

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Introduction

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# Part I

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## The Primitive Epoch

The earliest epoch in the history of man produced very elementary forms of culture and social organisation, which were gradually improved in the course of history. The primitive community, the principal cell of human society, was a comparatively small but well-knit organism. The types of links between individuals within that organism changed, and the society formed by these basic "molecules" grew, but the significance of the community remained immense. For this reason, this epoch is called the primitive communal socioeconomic formation.

The beginning of the primitive epoch marked the dawn of mankind's history. At that time, two interconnected and mutually conditioned processes took place: man evolved from the animal world, and human society emerged as a qualitatively new form of the existence of matter with its specific laws. These processes were long and complicated, and each new discovery kindles anew the controversy connected with them.

Recent studies point to Africa, and specifically East Africa, as the locus where man first evolved. Some five or three million years ago, the australopithecines became numerous here; certain of their morphological features anticipated human morphology. They weighed relatively little (36 to 55 kilograms) and moved on two feet, which left their upper extremities free from the function of supporting the body. Their brain capacity varied from 435 to 600 cubic centimetres—a fairly large brain, particularly in relation to the total body mass. Split bones of large animals are found next to the remains of the australopithecines, which indicates a meat diet, while crudely fashioned stones seem to point to the

beginnings of "instrumental activity". It is difficult to say, however, to what extent production of tools was goal-directed and regular.

Interpretation of these materials has a direct bearing on the long debated problem of the boundary line between man and ape and the criteria for such a delimitation. For a long time, the view was popular that 700 to 800 cubic centimetres was the "brain Rubicon" separating man as such from anthropoid apes. More reliable is the triple feature of large size of the brain, erect posture and the development of the hand adapted for specific operations, including fine manipulation in which the thumb is opposed to the rest of the hand. There are indications, however, that erect hominids of the *Australopithecus* type were going through an intense and variable evolution producing a number of morphologically different populations. Moreover, the specific features of the purely human activity and behaviour brought about morphological changes only after a long period of development. In recent years, most researchers have therefore paid increasing attention to traces of specifically human activity, thus recognising, in fact, the enormous cognitive significance of the labour theory of anthropogenesis.

Indeed, on such East African sites as Olduvai and Koobi Fora, 2.6 to 1.9 million years old, we find a set of primitive but sufficiently varied stone tools, a permanent settlement with oval dwellings, and evidence of regular slaughter of large animals. These are undoubtedly features of the qualitatively novel phenomenon—of human culture. Here, too, were found the remains of the subject himself of these first human achievements; he was named *Homo habilis*,



"able man". He was relatively short in stature, 122 to 140 centimetres high, and the bone structure of his feet fell within the limits of variations occurring in modern man, which points to a morphology corresponding to a permanently erect posture. His brain capacity was 675 to 680 cubic centimetres. The Olduvai culture was, in fact, the first chapter in the history of mankind and of human society.

The motive forces of the humanisation of apes were varied. First, the structure and behaviour of anthropoid apes held the premises of many later qualitative changes. These premises included an excess of energy expended in investigation and manipulation, irregular hunting, which implanted the habit of eating meat, and irregular use of stones and sticks in certain operations. Regular instrumental and labour activity triggered off a number of interdependent factors. Regular employment of tools significantly expanded the food resources and the possibilities of defence against predators. Meat-eating produced certain changes in the digestive canal and a redistribution of the body mass, which in its turn reinforced the upright posture.

Gradually, animal egoism gave way to primitive collectivism. Particularly important, however, was the production of tools for use in subsequent operations. This activity assumes goal-directed consciousness and an ability to foresee the results of a series of future actions. Whole sets of tools, including highly advanced ones, rather than isolated items are found in ancient settlements of the Olduvai type. The conscious fabrication of elementary tools was connected with the formation of elementary concepts, i. e., with the development of thinking. This had an undoubted impact on the inner structure of the brain, although at present we can only assess its progress by the external criterion of overall size. These developments ultimately took man to a stage qualitatively different from the rest of living matter.

Numerous sites where australopithecines were found as well as remains of primitive men and their settlements, compel scholars to accept the view, propounded already by Charles Darwin, that Africa was the birthplace of man. Morphologically, Javan Pithecanthropi show signs of higher development and are included in the group of Archanthropus; the links between most of the Javan finds with the so-called Trinil fauna also point to a date later than the African finds—between 500,000 and 1 million years.

True, the oldest Pithecanthropus, referred to as the primitive Pithecanthropus, lived between 1.5 and 1.9 million years ago. So far, however, no ancient tools have been found on the sites where remains of *Homo pithecanthropus* were discovered.

The African finds give a vivid picture of the life and activity of primitive man. In the first place, excavations at Olduvai, where the remnants of a number of camp sites dating from different periods have been studied, have yielded an extensive collection of stone tools. In some cases the raw materials for the tools were brought from a distance of several dozen kilometres. Pebble tools, with the working edge shaped by chipping off pieces on one or both sides, predominate here. These implements are called choppers and chopping tools; they were used without a handle and were gripped directly by the hand. These simple artifacts were universal chopping and cutting tools and, as special experiments have shown, could be used to cut down a tree out of which a club or a primitive spear might be made. Tools were also fabricated through more complex operations, a raw stone was first hewn in such a way as to produce what is known as the nucleus, which was later split and the resultant flakes were used as tools. Scrapers, points and drills resembling stone tools of much later periods are also found at Olduvai. Apparently extremely varied tools were produced by trial and error in the spontaneously developing stone tool industry, but these, with the possible exception of choppers and chopping tools, do not yet occur in stable series. Bone was also sometimes broken off and sharpened, and the tools thus produced were used in various labour operations.

Numerous remnants of bone show clearly that hunting was the main source of food. Many thousands of bones of various animals (mostly of bulls, but also of antelopes and hippopotami) were discovered at Oldowan camp sites. Turtles and possibly fish were also used for food. The natural environment in which *Homo habilis* lived was open savannas—large steppe plateaus with clumps of trees. This type of landscape produces the highest amount of biomass—between four and five tons per square kilometre. The exceptional profusion of animals was naturally a great help to the hunters armed with throwing stones, that most ancient of missiles, and also, apparently, with prototypes of later clubs and spears.

The results of studying the camp sites themselves also point to considerable successes in labour and organisation. Thus a ring-shaped paved structure, 4 by 4.6 metres large, made of bits of lava, was discovered at one of the Oldowan camp sites. These were, apparently, supports for poles or branches on which animal skins were stretched to form an enclosure against the wind. At another camp site a concentration of finds was discovered in an area seven by five metres large, which broke off so abruptly that there is every reason to assume the existence of a fence at this point which was made of organic materials that have since rotted away. At Melka Kontouré, another camp site of that period, lying within 50 kilometres from Addis Ababa, stone rings have been unearthed apparently intended to fix the poles of a shelter. Thus we have here camp sites with a definite internal spatial organisation where man settled for fairly long periods of time.

In view of all this it may be assumed that such monuments were left behind by prototypes of later human communities for which some researchers suggest the term "the primitive horde". Judging from the areas of maximal concentration of products of life activity, ten to twelve people lived at a single Oldowan camp site. Ethnographic evidence shows that primitive wandering hunters form groups of ten to twenty people which can join in larger groups of 40 to 70 individuals during the dry season, when the so-called battue hunting is practised. These groups of wandering hunters are unstable structures, now falling apart, now united again. Monuments like the Oldowan camp sites were apparently the base camps of such groups, to which they regularly returned. Social links undoubtedly emerged within such groups; regular big game hunting and protection of the young were only made possible by primitive collectivism. Hunting and meat-eating made it necessary to regulate the distribution of products amongst group members.

The development rate of these earliest human communities was, we must say, extremely slow. During two million years, both the range of tools used or the technique of their production remained virtually unchanged. This was the extensive period of development, so to speak: groups of humans were kept on the move by their prime occupation of hunting, spreading far to the north and continually opening up new territories. Tools of the Oldowan type were

discovered at several sites in the south of Europe. At Al 'Ubaid, a site south of Lake Tiberias in Palestine, similar tools have been found that are deemed to be 900,000 to 800,000 years old. Such tools also occur in some places in Syria. Along with the expansion to new territories, a certain technical progress, reflected in the changing forms of stone tools and methods of their production, was gradually achieved. These innovations marked a new period in the history of human society, one that is called the old Acheulian (700,000 to 300,000 years ago).

Moving north, primitive man encountered a harsher natural environment than the one that produced the Oldowan culture. The period in which man first evolved, called the Quaternary geological period, was marked by regular onsets of glaciation—a series of Ice Ages. The centres of glaciers lay in the mountainous regions of northern America and Europe, but they spread far to the south, covering nearly a third of all dry land. On the edge of the glaciers a tundra landscape developed, which farther to the south was replaced by cold steppe and forest-steppe. Mammoth, woolly rhinoceros, cave lion and reindeer supplanted at such periods the warm-loving fauna. Africa, South Asia, Australia, and South America were not covered by continental glaciers, but there were great changes there as well as periods of abundant precipitation, high humidity, and decline in temperature set in. Four major glaciations are distinguished in the scheme established for the Alps: Günz (1,000,000–700,000), Mindel (500,000–350,000), Riss (200,000–120,000) and Würm (80,000–10,000 years ago). Within these major periods there were several stages of temporary rises and falls in temperature.

These harsh conditions were a kind of test of the strength of the new biological species that had come into being on the Earth. During glaciation, all types of warm-loving fauna, from elephants to ostriches, either died out or moved south, while the scattered and badly armed human communities showed an immense ability for adaptation and survival under extreme conditions. This was due to greater flexibility of behaviour regulated by highly developed mental activity and to the reliability of the new links between individuals in human society. The techniques of stone tool production gradually advanced. Already at the concluding stages of Olduvai, pear-shaped bifacially worked tools with a butt for con-

venience of holding appeared. These tools came to be known as handaxes in archaeology.

During the Middle and Late Acheulian (300,000 to 100,000 years ago), several types of carefully worked handaxes existed. Some of them may have been used as spearheads. A new method of preparing the nucleus for making tools, which was called the Levallois technique, developed. A stone intended as a nucleus was carefully trimmed to shape on all sides. Flakes and blades could be chipped off such a nucleus that were both thinner and of a more regular form than before. Thanks to the Levallois technique, a kind of mass production of stereotype blanks for tool-making became possible. The range of ancient implements of labour became more varied, and the tools themselves were of better quality.

Man himself also developed. *Homo habilis* was replaced by *Homo archanthropus*, which included Javan Pithecanthropus and Chinese or Pekin Pithecanthropus usually called Sinanthropus in the literature. Man became 30 cm taller, his skull grew in size, but the prominent eyebrow ridges and absence of the chin markedly distinguished *Homo archanthropus* from modern man. The cortex also underwent certain qualitative changes. Areas of the cortex associated with the specific functions of labour and speech communication became especially well developed. The character of the frontal convolutions in the right and the left hemispheres confirms that man became right-handed, that is to say, he mostly used the right hand in working. The gap between man and his apelike ancestors grew.

The centre of technical development was now clearly shifted from tropical Africa, where man opposed himself to the animal world for the first time, to the zone between latitudes 30° and 50° North. The Middle East, North Africa and Southern Europe became the foci of man's pulseline development; here the progress of human culture was impeded and at the same time stimulated by the icy breath of regular onsets of glaciation. Uneven development, a characteristic feature of the historical process, came into play. Certain groups worked out and maintained better techniques of making stone tools becoming the carriers of technical progress in their migrations.

Clear evidence for this is found in the Near East, where dozens of Palaeolithic sites have been discovered and carefully studied on the territory of Syria

and Palestine. It appears that two groups of the population existed here in the Early Acheulian; one of them was local, Late Oldowan in culture, and the other was close in origin to the Oldowans but developed faster, mastering the production of bifacially worked tools earlier than the former. In the Eastern Mediterranean area, at least six versions of Palaeolithic culture are identified in the Late Acheulian period. Often groups of humans that used different techniques of stone working visited the same caves, so that levels with artifacts of different technical traditions could overlap, as happened, for instance, in the Jabrud rockshelters in Syria.

A whole series of remnants of ancient camp sites and of accidental finds indicates a broad expansion of *Homo archanthropus* throughout Southern Europe. An Early Acheulian camp site was excavated at Vértesszőllős, 50 kilometres north-west of Budapest. Here, man hunted the bear, the horse, the deer and the aurochs. Oldowan traditions were still strong in their technique of making stone tools, many of which were crude pebble implements. Of exceptional importance was the use of fire, evidence of which is provided by numerous traces of camp-fires in which animal bones as well as other material were burned. The use of fire enabled man to survive the fluctuations of temperature on the fringes of glacier zones. Terra Amata and Grotte du Lazaret at Nice, carefully studied by French archaeologists, are seasonal camp sites of ancient hunters. Apart from hunting various animals and birds, *Homo archanthropus* inhabiting this area also caught fish and shellfish for food. No remains of ancient man have been discovered, but a clear imprint of the right foot was found from which the height of the man that once walked here was worked out (1.56 m). Temporary oval shelters, 8 to 15 m by 4 to 6 m in size, were built at the camp site. Stones were set along the walls; in the floor, holes left by the support posts were found. In the centre of the dwelling, a hearth was built on a platform paved with pebbles; a stone wall was erected to protect the fire from the wind. The frame dwelling at Grotte du Lazaret also points to primitive man's attention to the comforts of home. Only non-resinous species of trees were used for fires, built for warmth, and primitive beds were made of seaweeds covered with pelts close to the hearth.

During the Acheulian, hunting developed and improved. Groups of hunters appeared that specialised

in killing mostly one species of animal. Thus, many Acheulian hunters of Europe went after the forest elephant, as the killing of one fully grown animal provided them with about a ton of meat. At Lehringen in Germany a temporary hunting camp site has been discovered where hunters cut up the carcass of a slain elephant and moved on, apparently loaded with meat. A wooden spear, stuck between the ribs, was found among the remaining bones of the skeleton. The 215-centimetre-long spear was made of yew, and its point was hardened by fire.

The hunting camp sites of Torralba and Ambrona in Spain provide excellent material for reconstructing the hunting activities of that period. The principal animal hunted was the forest elephant, which accounted for four-fifths of all the animals killed. The type of bone find shows clearly that the carcasses were mostly cut up where the animals were hunted down: there were relatively few skulls of elephants and leg bones at camp sites. The materials of Torralba and Ambrona show that the cultural-economic type of vagrant hunters and gatherers of the woods and savannas was then evolving. At the same time *Homo archanthropus* continued his expansion throughout the Old World. In the Acheulian, man appears in western Central Asia and the Caucasus. In the latter area, camps were sited in the caves of the higher mountain ridges which offered shelter for the hunters pursuing the cave bear and large herbivorous animals – the deer and the mouflon.

The stone tools of *Sinanthropus* known from the excavations of the immense open cave of Choukoutien, 50 kilometres south-west of Peking, show considerable originality. The ashes of fires show that the Peking man knew the use of fire. At one spot, the accumulation of ashes is six metres thick, which indicates the existence of a kind of eternal flame there. *Sinanthropus* used wild berries and fruit for food, including the wild cherry, but hunting the deer provided the bulk of his nourishment. Bones of antelope, horse, boar, bison, buffalo and even rhinoceros and elephant also occur. Judging by split human bones, ancient hunters were not averse to cannibalism. *Sinanthropus* made crude choppers of the pebble type out of quartz, and also utilised the flakes formed in the process. Most tools are extremely primitive, while handaxes are not found at all.

Excavations of Acheulian camp sites give an idea

of the human communities inhabiting them. Judging by the size of Terra Amata dwellings, a local group of vagrant hunters and gatherers of 10 to 15 individuals, now swelling, now shrinking, was, as before, the principal cell of human society in the Acheulian epoch. The number of individuals dwelling in the frame shelter of 55 square metres at Grotte du Lazaret is set at nine to twelve by the researchers. The area of the dwelling complex at the temporary hunting camp site in Syrian Latamne is estimated to have covered 200 square metres; it may have been a simple enclosure without a roof, reinforced by stones along its base. Sites that were most convenient for settlement became permanent base camps which could be used during seasons linked with a definite type of activity. Thus men returned eleven times to Terra Amata, and each time it was during the same season. Differences in the techniques of making stone tools in different groups inhabiting a certain area indicate certain links between several local groups of hunters and gatherers of this region. This is hardly evidence of a formal grouping based on some social or organisational criterion but rather of the existence of human communities bound by stable cultural traditions, with genetic kinship as the more remote basis. At the same time it was a kind of prototype of the larger social organisms characteristic of the epoch of efflorescence of the primitive communal system.

Clear evidence for the steady development and growing complexity of all types of human activity and forms of organisation of human society is found in the materials of the Mousterian epoch (100,000–35,000 years ago). Its beginning coincided with the Riss-Würm interglacial period, when Europe still enjoyed a dry warm climate and its fauna was still subtropical – forest elephant, hippopotamus, and rhinoceros. But later the Würm glaciation set in, when the climate in Europe was at its coldest. The tundra and the cold steppe with islands of forest thickets were filled with the mammoth fauna – reindeer, wild horse, bison, and mammoth itself, which reached the territory of central Italy in the south.

During the Mousterian epoch, man went through a further development – *Homo archanthropus* was transformed into *Homo palaeoanthropus*, better known as Neanderthal man. Neanderthal man's brain varied in capacity between 900 and 1,800 cubic centi-

metres, with an average of 1,350 cubic centimetres. Compared to *Homo archanthropus*, Neanderthal man had much better developed areas of the brain responsible for the complex forms of spatial coordinative functions, labour acts, speech, and control of these processes. Accordingly, the dome of the cranium became higher and more rounded. Despite the somewhat archaic appearance, Neanderthal man was on the whole a fairly highly developed creature, as confirmed by the latest archaeological discoveries shedding light on various aspects of his instrumental activity.

The technique of tool making by flaking and subsequent working of the face of the stone rose to a new level in the Mousterian epoch. Mousterian disc-shaped nuclei yielded triangular and oval flakes that were used to produce extremely varied tools. There are some 60 varieties of these, including the typically Mousterian points which were in some cases apparently used as spearheads and dart tips. Wood was employed rather extensively; we know from the surviving prints that in building his dwellings Neanderthal man used 20- to 30-centimetre-thick posts made of trees he had cut down.

Uneven development became increasingly apparent in the Mousterian epoch. East and South Africa lagged more and more behind. Sites of the Acheulian types found here date from the times when man in Europe and the Near East entered the Mousterian epoch. Europe, North Africa and the Near East formed an area of intense development in which modern man of the *Homo sapiens* type evolved among various populations of Neanderthal man.

A characteristic feature of the development of the Near East in the Mousterian epoch was the accentuation of local differences, which became more distinct and stable. Thus, researchers have identified nine local variants of the Levallois-Mousterian culture in Syria and Palestine. Not all of them were contemporaneous, but cultural diversity was on the whole indubitable: groups of humans invariably using identical traditional techniques of working stone and habitual, stable assemblages of tools existed here side by side. A cemetery for the burial of clansmen was situated next to the camp site. Ten Neanderthal burial places were discovered in the es-Skhül cave situated on Mount Carmel. A real necropolis was found at Cafzeh, where the dead were laid in one and the same posture—on the right side, knees

bent, facing the cave entrance. Double burials occur at Cafzeh and es-Skhül; here, a woman and a child were buried together. In one grave at Cafzeh containing the skeleton of a tall man of massive build, two flint tools, pieces of ochre and a limestone block bearing traces of handling were found. Another skeleton, that of a ten-year-old boy, was found in a pit of which the walls were reinforced by upended slabs of limestone. The skull of a large gazelle and an ostrich egg were placed over the crossed arms, the charred egg possibly baked. Here we undoubtedly observe a whole burial ritual.

Mousterian sites of the Near Eastern hinterland are not so well studied, but, judging from the materials available, similar developments took place there as well.

Thus Neanderthal burials were found in the Shanidar cave in one of which the burial pit was framed with a stone ring and armfuls of flowers were laid on the bottom, as pollen analysis shows.

On the European continent, a stable development of local variants of the Mousterian culture, identified by detailed analysis of stone tool sets and the techniques of their production, is also observed. On the territory of France alone, four varieties of the local Mousterian are distinguished by specialists. Here, too, camp sites situated both in open spaces and caves and shelters are found. At Peyrards, a dwelling was built before an overhanging cliff the foundation for which consisted of a fence of stone blocks enclosing an area 11.5 by 7 metres large. Interestingly, the pollen of water plants was found in a cave lying 200 metres above a water course, the pollen most likely brought to the cave with water. It appears that Neanderthal man brought water to the cave in some sort of vessels, possibly crudely made of skins, familiar from ethnographic materials among many tribes of hunters and gatherers. Specialised types of hunting played the principal role in the hunting activities of West European Neanderthal man; the specialisation was apparently seasonal in character. Mammoth, reindeer and bison were hunted in the open spaces. Bisons, which weighed up to a ton, were a tempting game though difficult to get; they were most likely driven into pits or bog and then killed. As in the Middle East, a fairly large number of Neanderthal burials, usually situated near the cave dwellings, were found in Western Europe.

The tendency towards isolation of local variants of

the Mousterian culture is also observed in Eastern Europe. A whole series of such variants have been identified by Soviet archaeologists on the Dniester and in the adjoining areas. Some data on the construction of dwellings in open spaces have also been obtained here. Thus remnants of a dwelling measuring eight by five metres have been excavated at the Molodova I camp site in the upper reaches of the Dniester. The foundation of the dwelling was formed by bones of large animals, including twelve mammoth skulls, which apparently held firm the posts of the shelterlike structure. Inside the dwelling there was an additional partition of large bones, a hearth, and a row of mammoth's massive teeth along the walls, weighing up to eight kilograms each and possibly used as stools. A technique of housing construction thus evolved which later became very popular among the hunters in subglacial areas. In the Crimea, burials before cave entrances followed the same pattern as in the Near East: the body was laid in a burial pit in the embryonic posture on the right side. Of particular interest is the burial, discovered by the Soviet archaeologist A. P. Okladnikov, of a Neanderthal boy in the Teshik-Tash cave in the south of Uzbekistan, with horns of a mountain goat surrounding the body.

Neanderthal burials indicate the existence of fairly well-developed ideological notions. Undoubtedly various factors played a role in the appearance of burials, including the instinctive drive, known in various animals, to get rid of the dead body, as well as an attachment to members of a given group. The latter factor is attested by the placement of burials and whole cemeteries in close proximity to the dwellings. The emergence of a definite ritual—obligatory burial of the body in a pit on the right side and with bent knees—is also noteworthy. The placing of tools in the grave may be seen as evidence for the burgeoning ideas about some sort of activities continuing after death, while stone fences round the burial pits might be imitations of the stone plinth of Neanderthal man's real dwellings. The growing complexity of ideological concepts is also indicated by the nascent animal cult which, judging by its connection with the principal type of hunted animal, may be the prototype of totemism. In Western Europe archaeologists have long established Neanderthal man's special attitude to the cave bear, the main object of hunting for many hunting groups.

Thus at Drachenloch bear skulls and bones were found in boxes of limestone slabs, in the Peterschele cave they lie in special niches, while next to a Neanderthal man's burial at Regurdu the head and broken bones of a bear are buried in a pit closed by a stone slab measuring two by two metres and weighing nearly 400 kilograms. Certain intellectual developments are also indicated by finds of separate objects with various signs painted or incised on them, as well as of stone and clay balls arranged in a definite order. The significance of these isolated facts must not, of course, be exaggerated: we have here, in fact, only rudiments of ideological concepts which later grew in complexity constituting systems which determined the social consciousness of the primitive epoch.

The improvement and specialisation of tools, a complex cycle of economic activity, and the rudiments of ideological concepts were paralleled by an increasingly complex social relations. Indicative in this respect is the very structure of places of habitation, which included both the dwellings of the living members of the community and their last refuge. The cohesion of the hunting groups, which apparently warrant the name of communities, was very great. Thus, one of the Shanidar Neanderthal men was 50 years old, and he lost his right hand in his youth—an indication of the high efficiency of the hunting economy, which enabled the group to feed an incapacitated member, and also of the sense of comradeship and cohesion within this group. The system of social links within such a community is hard to ascertain. Repeated finds of double burials of women and children invite the conclusion that certain rules arising from the relatively long and stable ties between the mother and her offspring were coming into effect. Historical interpretation of local variants of the Mousterian culture occupying stretches of land of 50 to 200 kilometres is an extremely difficult task. A stable cultural tradition could be reinforced here by certain social and organisational links between several hunting communities. The term "prototribes" has been suggested for such unions; their hunting grounds would thus be the domain of such a local culture variant.

Conflicts could apparently occur between groups belonging to different cultures. Thus, the thigh bone of a skeleton found in the es-Skhül cave burial ground has traces of a wound inflicted by a wooden



spear. Neanderthal men from Java and from a monument on the territory of the German Democratic Republic have skull wounds inflicted by stones and clubs. The short life span of Neanderthal man is also suggestive: a generation lasted only slightly more than twenty years, on average. In fact, Neanderthal man died so early that he was barely able to produce offspring. The development of human society followed an arduous path. Only in comparing the initial and final links of the chain do we observe the working of the law of progress.

The next stage in the history of human society is the Upper or Late Palaeolithic (35,000–10,000 years ago). During this period, the principal forms of culture and social organisation achieved high development and complexity, and man of the modern type finally took shape. The Upper Palaeolithic largely fell within the last glaciation, called the Würm (in Europe) or Wisconsin (in North America) glaciation when temperature dropped especially low. At the same time preriglacial Europe, owing to its southern location, had more daylight and sun radiation than the modern tundra. This made the Upper Pleistocene tundra rich in forage, in fact, an optimal source of food for mammals. The rich hunting grounds and high yield of the biomass apparently explain, to a large extent, the cultural rise in the Upper Palaeolithic society on the European continent.

As far as one can see, man of the new type, *Neanthropus* or *Homo sapiens*, emerged on the territory of Europe, the Near East and North Africa. This type of man is often called Cro-Magnon man, from the name of the site in France where the first remains were found. Compared to Neanderthal man, the greatest changes in *Homo sapiens* occur in the facial skeleton – the massive eyebrow ridge disappears, the chin develops, and the brain further grows in height, the frontal lobes developing especially noticeably. Fairly rapidly the new anthropological type everywhere replaces Neanderthal man. The development of *Homo sapiens*'s brain permits the assumption that the new type of man was highly social. Soviet anthropologists believe that this feature facilitated his rapid expansion, as selection eliminated individuals and especially populations with aggressive behaviour and antisocial instincts destructive to the early human communities. This conclusion appears particularly convincing since all available data on the production and culture of

Upper Palaeolithic *Neanthropus* point to a qualitatively new level of social relations.

Considerable progress is achieved in tool fabrication due to three most important innovations. First, the prismatic nucleus became the source material for blanks of flint tools; narrow plates with sharp straight edges could be flaked off such cores. These flakes could be used as tools even without any additional working. Second, pressure flaking was used for shaping stone tools – a technique in which thin flakes were removed by pressure applied by means of some implement of wood or bone. Finally, mounted tools became widespread, in which whole sets of flint flakes forming the working edge were set in a wooden or bone base. These innovations served as the technical basis for the development of tool production during the many millennia leading up to the New Stone Age. Various tools were also regularly made of bone and horn. Of special significance for hunting were bone harpoons and the so-called spear-thrower – a stick with a rest that sent the javelin almost twice as far as the bare hand.

Intense development of the Upper Palaeolithic culture was especially marked in Europe, which had long been opened up and relatively densely populated by Palaeolithic hunters. Mass battue hunts were the basis of the economy. Thus a thick layer of bones of at least 10,000 wild horses was found near the Solutré camp site in France under a steep cliff off which whole herds must have been driven. The organisation of such hunts steadily improved; during excavations in the La Vache grotto in the south of France a hunting horn was found that could be used to transmit signals over long distances. The hunters' base camp sites consisted of permanent dwellings with hearths. There were 13 such dwellings partly sunk in the ground at the Pavlov camp site excavated in Czechoslovakia. The growing well-being was reflected in the spreading of ornaments. In the Upper Palaeolithic burials in the vicinity of Mentonne in Italy, necklaces and bracelets made of shells, teeth of animals and fish vertebrae were found next to the skeletons. Seashells were apparently sewn on clothes, too. Particularly impressive, however, are the numerous monuments of primitive art created by the Upper Palaeolithic hunters of Europe. More than 100 caves and grottoes with Upper Palaeolithic paintings, some of them real primitive shrines, have been discovered. A kind of primitive

applied art also developed: many bone artifacts were embellished by artistically painted or incised scenes or by simpler ornamentation. Art monuments are found in particular profusion in the south of France and in northern Spain; researchers therefore regard these areas as a special province of primitive art called Franco-Cantabrian.

Monuments studied by Soviet archaeologists on the territory of the USSR offer a striking picture of the development of the Upper Palaeolithic culture. Here, just as in Western Europe, battue hunting flourished in which masses of large animals were slaughtered and much of the meat was wasted. The traces of an immense battue have been found near Amvrosievka, where nearly a thousand aurochs were killed. Almost a fourth of the skeletons are lying in the proper anatomical order, the hunters obviously having slaughtered more animals than they could consume. Mammoth hunters were also guilty of numerous ravages: the remains of 70 to 110 mammoths have been found near some camp sites in the Ukraine. Domesticated wolves already accompanied the hunters of Eastern Europe and subglacial Asia. The dog was especially valuable to the taiga hunters. It is no accident that cult burials of dogs have been found in Siberia; a burial ground of this kind, with an abundance of raddle, has been discovered in a Palaeolithic dwelling in Kamchatka.

Upper Palaeolithic hunters' base camps were real settlements consisting of several dwellings whose lower parts were excavated into the ground (pit dwellings), measuring 20 to 25 square metres; for warmth, fires were built in the hearths. The settlement at Mezin had five such dwellings, and the one at Dobranichevka four. The camp site at Buret in Siberia also consisted of four dwellings. The overhead cover was stretched on a frame of mammoth bone. The bones of that woolly elephant were also widely used for fuel.

Art monuments—figurines of women and various animals made of bone and stone—are also fairly numerous at Kostenki. There are also fine engravings of articles, particularly of mammoth, made on stone. East European monuments of the Upper Palaeolithic are in general marked by a wealth and diversity of mobiliary art objects. The growing well-being of man is reflected in the two burial grounds found in the neighbourhood of the Sungir site, where dozens of bone beads were apparently originally

sewn on clothes and headgear. It has been estimated that more than two and a half thousand hours were spent on manufacturing, with the aid of stone tools, the beads found here. A kind of tomtoms have also been found at the Mezin camp site—the huge shoulderblades and other bones of mammoth with intricate ornamentation in ochre, used as percussion musical instruments. Paintings of animals in a cave in the Southern Urals, closely resemble similar monuments in Spain and France.

During the Upper Palaeolithic, man expanded to new territories, especially in the short periods of warmer climate. Separate groups of hunters penetrated to Yakutia and Kamchatka, and in the south man moved to Australia and later Tasmania. Primitive rafts and boats must have been used to cross the open seas and oceans. Finally, man first discovered the New World. Nine species of animals, including reindeer, musk-ox, elk, bison and saiga moved across the Bering Strait to North America by a bridge formed during the Wisconsin glaciation. Man may have first moved in here in pursuit of herds of wild animals. Groups of hunters rapidly penetrated into the south and south-west of what is now the USA. Here in the belt of rich prairies and meadows, local Upper Palaeolithic cultures were formed which steadily improved their missiles equipped with flint heads. Just as periglacial Europe, this was a zone of abundant biomass, with numerous herds of large herbivorous animals. The prime targets for hunting were at first mammoth and later bison; here, just as in the Old World, mass drives were practised, in which more animals were killed than could be used. Gradually groups of hunters spread far to the south, reaching Terra del Fuego, and by the end of the Upper Palaeolithic *Homo sapiens* had spread through all the continents of the globe.

All these successes of human society were directly linked with improvements in its inner structure and consolidation of the social links in human communities. This is one of the most difficult areas of study in remote epochs for modern scholars, as only dumb monuments of material culture of that epoch have survived, but these can also be valuable sources if properly approached. Judging by their size, the small pit dwellings equipped with hearths of which Upper Palaeolithic camp sites consisted were homes of small families which now formed the basic “molecules” of early society. This microcollective, how-

ever, never functioned independently, being part of larger groups marked by great economic and social cohesion. It is these groups that inhabited the camp sites, organised drives, and conducted ceremonies in the cave cult centres. The spontaneous ties of natural blood relationship were the actual basis for the consolidation of the social links.

The woman, who kept the home fire burning, kept house and brought up the children, was the most stable element of the primitive collective. Most Soviet researchers therefore believe that Upper Palaeolithic communities were groups linked by common descent on the maternal side. Such communities were, most likely, primitive clans of the early type. They were already an ordered form of societal organisation, a form that facilitated the development of primitive collectivism, cooperation and firm ties between kinsmen. As ethnographic materials show, the clan organisation is closely associated with exogamy – a rigorously observed custom of taking wives from neighbouring communities, mostly strictly limited ones. This custom apparently gave rise to the dual organisation of society – a system of two neighbouring communities linked by mutual marriages, survivals of which can be traced in many peoples.

The fairly complex economic, social and spiritual activity undoubtedly demanded an institution for its regulation – the institution of elders or chiefs, custodians of the accumulated information necessary for the group's reproduction. At this stage, the archaic or formative period of the primitive communal system came to an end and its efflorescence began. An indication of this may be found in art monuments that were no longer separate objects but whole complexes. The discovery of cave paintings is one of the most romantic episodes in archaeological science, full of turbulent controversy, excessive raptures and just as excessive scepticism. It is no longer doubted now that these monuments are of great antiquity, and that they performed complex functions pointing to well-developed ideological concepts of Upper Palaeolithic society. The subjects of paintings and engravings were taken from real life, mostly from the animal world. The drawings often overlapped. Most of the paintings and engravings are found in nearly inaccessible parts deep in the caves. Even sculptures of bison and bear were sometimes modelled in these remote corners. In one such secluded spot, human

footprints were found on the cave floor under a lime deposit, showing that some men moved on their toes while others, on their heels – obviously a sign of cultic ceremonies.

The purpose of such ceremonies can also be surmised. Here in the dark corners of cave shrines magic rituals were performed, the pictures on the walls presenting scenes mostly connected with hunting, that prime source of Upper Palaeolithic man's subsistence. We find here wounded animals, dying animals with blood flowing in streams from their wounds, and man's weapons. These are obviously scenes of hunting magic, part of the rites intended to ensure the success of hunting expeditions. Some scenes are clearly associated with fertility cults and the female principle symbolising it. Apparently magicians already existed who were the custodians of the legends and traditions that became the prototypes of mythologies; they also officiated at the rites.

Human representations are relatively rare, and these are almost exclusively of women. Particularly expressive are figurines of women, mostly cut out of bone, which portray a strong and fertile mother – an object of special respect among all primitive peoples. On the one hand, this is yet another indication of the development of the fertility cult, and on the other, evidence of the woman's special role. We seem to be faced here with the initial stages of the maternal consanguine cult. Human burials of that time are as a rule abundantly sprinkled with rattle, which also reflects rather complex ideas and symbolism: the red colour of rattle must have been associated with the colour of blood and fire – sources of life and warmth.

Simultaneously, positive knowledge of the surrounding world was accumulated. For example, cave paintings and engravings reflect fine differences within one species of animals, say, between the Alpine and the Pyrenean goat. Careful analysis of numerous incisions and markings on bone found in the USSR has shown the existence of the most popular groupings – quintuples and septuples, and double multiplications of these. The quintuples must be linked with the development of counting on the fingers, a proof of which is found in outlines of the hand with the fingers crooked in some caves. The frequency of septuples is most likely connected with the phases of the moon. Some researchers believe that a calendar system based on the phases of the moon already existed in those times.

As the picture of concrete historical development grows in complexity and uneven development becomes more pronounced, the specific features of the cultures of separate regions and large areas stand out more clearly. This is especially manifest in the Mesolithic epoch or the Middle Stone Age. This period, first identified from European materials, is characterised by the wide use of thin flakes for tool making, including flakes of geometric forms—trapeziums, segments and triangles, and by the appearance of the bow and arrows. The end of the Mesolithic is marked by the appearance of clay pottery. Basically the same features are inherent in the Mesolithic of the Near East, but the direction and rate of development of the economic activities of the tribes of these two areas in the Mesolithic differed.

Cardinal climatic and landscape changes were taking place in Mesolithic Europe (10th to 6th millennia B. C.). The climate became warmer, the glacier moved back to the north, and the Baltic Sea in its modern boundaries became free of ice. Simultaneously the mammoth fauna disappeared entirely, and the animals that now grazed in oak forests and forest-steppe—various kinds of deer, elk, aurochs, and boar—were quite different from the Upper Palaeolithic. A kind of “resource crisis” set in; the time of mass drives that yielded many tons of meat at a stroke was past, and man was turning more and more to the food resources of rivers and seas. A complex fishing-and-hunting economy evolved in many areas. Striking monuments of this economy are huge mounds of refuse, the so-called shell middens, in which the shells of sea and river molluscs used for food were especially numerous. The means of crossing water barriers were improved: at one Mesolithic site a boat was discovered burnt out of a fir trunk; finds of wooden paddles are also known. Europe’s population became sparser, apparently because of migration to the northern territories earlier covered by the glacier.

In some cases, the fishing-and-hunting economy led to a settled mode of life. Evidence for this is found in the excavation of the Lepenski Vig settlement on the Danube above the Iron Gates. Here, 12 dwellings were situated along the river terrace, of which the floors were crudely plastered in lime painted red or white. In some houses, graves were also dug near the hearths. Fishing for large carp flourished, and was combined with deer hunting.

Crude sculptures were made of stone. Although pottery was unknown, the settlement, which has several levels, is of a rather recent date—5500 to 4600 B. C. This is an indication of the slower development of the greater part of Europe during the Mesolithic. At that time, cultures with fundamentally different modes of obtaining food—agriculture and livestock-breeding—already flourished in the Near East and in the south of the European continent.

The Near East was the principal area where these kinds of economic activity, which played a cardinal role in the history of mankind, first emerged. There were signs of changes to come already in the Mesolithic cultures of that region. Thus, in Syria and Palestine, the same caves and grottoes which had given refuge to Mousterian hunters, became the camp sites of the Natufian culture in the 10th and 9th millennia B. C. These tribes were gazelle hunters and fishermen. Here, there are many fish bones and bone hooks and harpoons in the cultural levels, but a new tool, a sickle for cutting down overgrowths of plants, also appears in the Natufian assemblage of instruments. Finds of these tools are very numerous. Seasonal gathering of wild cereals was obviously practised here, and first steps may have been made towards their cultivation. Man became more firmly tied to growths of edible plants and to fishing grounds, and the settled mode of life took root. Of special interest in this respect are the excavations of the Mureybit site on the banks of Euphrates, 80 kilometres from Aleppo. Here, oval houses were discovered in levels belonging to the late 9th and early 8th millennia B. C.; the floor and walls of these dwellings were faced with stone and coated with clay. The inhabitants of these dwellings hunted gazelle, aurochs, and wild horse, but they also regularly ate fish, waterfowl and shellfish. At the same time grains of wild wheat and barley were found in abundance, and these could only grow at the foot of mountains, that is, not less than 100 to 150 kilometres from Mureybit. There are two explanations for this remarkable find. What we have here may well be the first case of growing cereals outside their natural habitat, which did not yet produce any morphological changes in the plants themselves. Alternatively, Mureybit may have been a permanent settlement of hunters and fishermen who, at the time of the ripening of crops, went to areas dozens of kilometres from their dwellings and brought thrashed

grain home. In both cases we have a very important stage of "pre-agricultural" activity.

Similar signs of the coming economic and cultural changes occur in the mountainous regions of Iraqi Kurdistan. Here, Mesolithic levels belonging to the 10th and 9th millennia B.C. were found at the Shanidar cave which was, just as in the Palaeolithic, a winter camp site. In summer the community moved a short way down into the valley, where a settlement lay whose remnants are now called Zawi Chemi Shanidar. This community continued to hunt the large hoofed animals—goat, deer, and moufflon, but zoologists believe that it also began to domesticate sheep. Analysis of the pollen of cereals shows that they were already cultivated.

The transition to agriculture and stock-breeding, as indicated by the materials of Mesolithic monuments of the Near East, signified a radical upheaval in primitive economy. Its consequences were so great that we have every reason to speak of a revolution in the production of food, the Neolithic revolution, to use the name of the epoch that followed the Mesolithic. Considering that for two million years mankind had been content with collecting food as it was found in nature, that was indeed a gigantic leap forward. Agriculture and livestock-breeding as the principal sources of food made man relatively well-to-do and resulted in a rapid growth of the population.

With the spreading of the settled mode of life mudbrick architecture developed; stable well-being stimulated various industries aimed at providing the home comforts and ornaments. Cooking vegetable food required plenty of cooking utensils, especially heat-resistant ones, and such cooking utensils did appear, at first made of stone and later of clay, with painted ornaments. Agriculture also necessitated the development of positive knowledge, greater precision of astronomical observation to provide a workable calendar, and the working out of agrarian cycles.

These cardinal economic changes become tangible from the very first stages of the early agrarian cultures. A typical early agricultural settlement is Jarmo in northern Iraq (7th millennium B.C.), which occupied an area of about a hectare and a half. Its eight-metre-thick cultural levels are formed by remnants of mudbrick houses that had large hearths. Here, grains of cultivated wheat and barley

were found as well as bones of domesticated goats and pigs. Vessels made of stone are predominant in the lower levels, while painted pottery is found in the upper strata.

The settled character of life at Jericho (8th millennium B.C.) is emphasised by an encircling stone wall one and a half metre thick. Mudbricks were already used here to build oval dwellings. In the 7th millennium B.C. solid mudbrick houses were erected, with limestone floors painted black and red. The inhabitants of the early agricultural Jericho grew wheat and barley, domesticated the goat; later yet another domestic animal, the cat, appeared to protect the granaries from rodents. Of considerable interest are the burial rites: skulls plastered with clay that seemed to reconstruct the facial features were buried under the floors of houses. This custom is a further development of the ancestor cult which seems to have arisen already in the Palaeolithic.

A remarkable example of the efflorescence of cultures that made the step to agriculture and livestock-breeding is found at Çatal Hüyük, which stands on the edge of the fruitful Konya plateau in south central Turkey and dates from the end of the 7th millennium B.C. or the beginning of the 6th. That was already a rather large village occupying an area of about 12 hectares. Apart from sheep and goats, there were herds of cows already, and 12 kinds of plants were grown in the fields, including wheat, barley and peas. The mudbrick houses were completely juxtaposed, but shrines marked by a rich interior stood out among the ordinary dwellings. Wall frescoes representing picturesque hunting scenes, geometric ornaments and cult scenes alternated with painted clay sculpture and reliefs. The cult of the aurochs, most frequently recurring in the paintings, played a special role. Clay figurines of strong-bodied women, protectresses of fertility, were very skilfully wrought. The overall cultural level was also rather high. Pottery was at its inception, but various vessels cut out of wood were excellent substitutes for it. Beads and cosmetics regularly recur in excavations of ancient burials. An oval obsidian mirror, the oldest ever, was found here.

The transition to new economic forms was also beginning in other regions. Remnants of cultivated plants (though there were no cereals among them), were found in Thailand during excavations of a cave

in levels dating from the 9th through 7th millennia B. C. The transition to agriculture and domestication of cattle in north-western Hindustan (Mehrgarh on the river Bolan in modern Pakistan) is now believed to have occurred in the 7th millennium B. C. In the Ganges valley, local communities of hunters and gatherers began artificial cultivation of rice in the 6th and 5th millennia B. C. Mexican monuments point to the emergence of maize-based agriculture in the 7th to 4th millennia B. C. A very early fountainhead of agriculture also existed in Peru. But Near Eastern materials provide the earliest and most striking evidence of agricultural and livestock-breeding communities, whose efflorescence was the best proof of the fundamental significance of the revolution in food production.

These economic changes were closely linked with consolidation of social ties. Early agricultural communities were larger than Palaeolithic ones. Complex forms of economic activity increased the importance of the elders and chiefs who directed these undertakings. It appears that consanguine communities also formed larger unions – tribes consisting of several clans and characterised by a definite cultural and territorial unity. Undertakings involving the whole tribe were directed by a tribal council consisting of the chiefs and elders of all the clans. It is not ruled out that larger structures – tribal confederations – also developed during the early agricultural period. The population of the Konya valley, where some 30 small villages and a kind of capital, Çatal Hüyük, were situated, may have formed such a confederation. Democratic self-government of clans and tribes was the political form which ensured allround development of the economy and culture of the primitive communal formation.

The moulding of agricultural and mixed agricultural and livestock-breeding cultures also signified a further intensification of uneven development. The contemporaries and neighbours of the highly developed communities of the south were still engaged in various forms of non-producing economy – hunting, fishing, and gathering, with concomitant archaic features in culture.

The consequences of the transition to new economic forms soon became apparent. The area occupied by agricultural and livestock-breeding communities was sharply expanded both through direct migration of ancient tribes and through tran-

sition to new forms of economic activity by numerous population groups under the influence of neighbours that had already accomplished that transition. A general rise in culture was also observed everywhere; its more noticeable indications were the flourishing of mobiliary art forms and home comforts industries. The latter implies an extensive development of housing construction. Man no longer found refuge in shelters or pit dwellings, which were replaced by well-built houses adapted to a variety of climatic zones. Figurines of humans and animals were made in every village out of extremely diverse materials, including bone, clay and stone. In their everyday life, ancient farmers used fine clay pottery with painted or incised ornaments.

These general features are characteristic of the entire extensive area of agricultural and stock-breeding cultures embracing a whole series of different tribal groups marked by unique cultural traits. A certain unevenness of development is observed here, some groups now outstripping others, now stagnating. A stable rise is observed, above all, in ancient Mesopotamia, along the middle Tigris and Euphrates. It was settled by agricultural tribes that had come down from the Zagros ridge in the east and by communities that migrated from the western cultural area. As a result, a settled culture of farmers and livestock-breeders evolved here that underlay, in fact, all the subsequent achievements of Mesopotamian civilisation.

This culture, called Hassuna after the first site that was discovered, belongs to the 6th millennium B. C. Hassuna culture settlements are spread throughout northern Mesopotamia, their southern boundary lying near Bagdad. Wooden hoes equipped with massive stone points were used to till the fields. Copper ware appeared, but it was not widespread and in any case did little to change the assemblage of tools in common use. Figurines of women with tall headgear were made of clay, and pottery of various types was covered with painted or incised ornaments.

A distinct variety of the Hassuna culture emerged along the middle Euphrates, where farmers entered a zone with precipitation insufficient for growing cereals. As a result, early forms of irrigation were used here, probably for the first time in history. Excavations at the Tell as Sawwan settlement near Bagdad revealed considerable amounts of grain, in-



cluding four varieties of barley, four of wheat, and one of flax. The presence of six-row barley, characteristic of irrigated areas, is quite significant. The settlement of as Sawwan itself was built on a regular square ground plan and was surrounded by a mud-brick wall. Numerous objects—ground stone vessels, stone figurines of women, and beads of semi-precious stones—were placed in nearly all the graves. Painted pottery was a remarkable monument of this culture's applied art. Goats at a spring, birds pecking at fishes, women with falling hair, were painted on flat dishes with a border of scorpions. These were obviously representations of scenes connected with complex mythological concepts. It was these tribes that concluded the settlement of Mesopotamia and moved along the Tigris and Euphrates south into the marshy areas of southern Mesopotamia. In the lowest levels of the town of Eridu situated in ancient times on the shore of the Persian Gulf, painted pottery was found in the first houses ever built here.

Simultaneously, similar economic and cultural developments took place in Huzistan, an area east of southern Mesopotamia. That plain, irrigated by the rivers Karun and Karkheh, is geographically an extension of the Mesopotamian Lowlands; Elam, situated on this plain, was closely connected with the history of Mesopotamia. Communities of shepherds and farmers that descended from the mountains began to appear here at least as early as the 7th millennium B. C. The Ali Kosh settlement presents a picture of gradual evolution of their culture. Here, the transition from freshet irrigation of fields to the first canals was gradually achieved. In the second half of the 7th millennium B. C. beads of forged copper appeared here, and in the first half of the 6th millennium, clay pottery covered with ornamental designs. A number of sites with painted pottery are known to exist on the territory of Elam, but there has so far been no large-scale excavation of these. The distribution of settlements shows that a very extensive territory was cultivated, which would have been impossible without some form of artificial irrigation. Thus a basic shift is beginning here, just as in neighbouring southern Mesopotamia, in the very foundation of the economy—in agriculture.

Agricultural tribes which built solid mudbrick houses and made fine pottery and mobiliary sculpture gradually settled the whole of the territory of Iran, where, next to Elam, several archaeological

cultures took shape, apparently corresponding to the territories occupied by the various tribal groups. There is a monument in the Kashan area of central Iran, called Tepe Sialk, which characterises another group of early agricultural tribes. In its lower levels, objects of forged copper are found side by side with straight sickles. The pottery of the Sialk I level was covered with geometrical ornament, to which paintings of goats were added in Sialk II.

Soviet archaeologists have reconstructed a picture of the development of early farming cultures in Soviet Central Asia, where the Jeitun culture took shape in the 6th millennium B. C. in the south-western part of the area, with its assemblage of characteristic cultural traits of the early agricultural epoch—solid mudbrick houses with painted floors, painted pottery and clay figurines of human beings and animals.

In areas east of Mesopotamia, the beginning of agriculture involved expansion to new territories, while in the western regions of the Middle East the culture of the tribes which were probably the first to begin food production continued to develop and improve. In the 6th and 5th millennia B. C., early agricultural settlements were known almost throughout the whole of Asia Minor. Hacilar in south-western Anatolia and Mersin in Konya have been studied better than other settlements in this region. These were relatively small villages, about half a hectare in size, inhabited by farmers and livestock-breeders. Metal objects occur in the excavations more and more often, with parallel decline and degradation of flint tools. Pottery is richly ornamented, and an excellent collection of terracotta figurines of women, sculpted with great realism and expression, was found at Hacilar.

In the 5th and 4th millennia B. C., Egypt is included in the zone of early farming cultures. The Fayum settlements in the Nile Delta are the typical early agricultural monuments here. In the 5th millennium B. C., the inhabitants of these villages cultivated wheat and barley and bred the principal species of domestic animals. However, clay pottery was rather crude and primitive, and there were no traces of copper being used. In Upper Egypt, an early farming and livestock-breeding culture is represented by the Tasian monuments. Tasian culture pottery was often ornamented with incised designs. The question of the origin of the first farmers in

Egypt is not quite clear, but local genesis is quite possible, if one considers recent evidence of extremely early beginnings of agriculture in the Nile valley. As distinct from Asia Minor and the adjacent areas, it is difficult to trace a continuous chain of early farming cultures here. But their intense development in the 5th and 4th millennia B.C. is beyond doubt. In the Badarian culture, which evolved from the Tasian culture, the production of pottery is greatly improved, and manufacture of various ivory objects develops. Figurines of women cut out of bone or moulded out of clay, a typical attribute of early farming cultures, occur here. By the 4th millennium B.C., all of the Nile valley must have been settled and the local communities must have begun to improve various industries at a rapid rate.

As regards the level of development of early farming cultures, the southern areas of the Balkan peninsula formed one zone with the Near East in the 6th and 5th millennia B.C. Already in the late 7th millennium B.C., cereals were cultivated here and cattle bred. The levels of the Frantchi cave in the Peloponnese in which bones of domesticated goats and sheep are found, are dated to the beginning of the 6th millennium B.C. The problem of the origin of European land cultivation and stock-breeding is the subject of lively debate in archaeological science. It is generally recognised that there were no prototypes in the local flora and fauna of wheat and barley or of sheep and goats, so that these were most likely introduced from the Middle East. The question remains, however, whether it was a multistage diffusion of technology or migration of groups of men. A certain similarity between the basic elements of the early farming culture of the Balkans (pottery, figurines, seals) and of the monuments of Asia Minor favour the latter assumption. At the same time it must be obvious that Anatolian models were not slavishly copied in the Balkans—we are rather dealing here with certain common elements of culture in the development of which the local tribes of Europe, the descendants of Mesolithic hunters, fishermen and gatherers, took an active part.

The earliest farming and stock-breeding cultures of Europe clearly fall into two groups. One of them, marked by painted pottery, embraces the southern villages found in Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and the neighbouring regions of Romania. The second, more northern, group of cultures is associated with

Central Europe and with the so-called *Bandkeramik*, or linear pottery. In the southern group, settlements were situated on brown forest soils or fertile alluvial deposits along river beds. A typical settlement is Nea Nikomedia in Macedonia (6th millennium B.C.). Here we find a type of houses characteristic of the early farmers of Europe, where wood was easily accessible and abundant precipitation necessitated the building of gable roofs. Sheep and goats were the principal domesticated animals, while cattle and pigs were not numerous. Pottery was ornamented with various inlays, including representations of human faces and figures.

Koranovo I, of which the monuments are spread throughout the Thracian plain, is a typical representative of Europe's early farming culture. The village of Koranovo I itself consisted of solid one-room houses measuring between 25 and 40 square metres. Apart from painted pottery, clay was used for making figurines of women, but these were also made of stone. The Starčevo culture in Yugoslavia is close to this level of development. Just as in Nea Nikomedia, sheep and goats were the principal domesticated animals. Widespread and typical of European sites are the *Spondylus* seashells out of which beads, bracelets and pendants were made. Besides figurines of sitting and standing women, a large vessel reproducing the female figure was found at Anza. Monuments of the Körös and Cris type, falling into a number of groups with local culture features, are close to the Starčevo culture.

A somewhat different picture is found in linear pottery settlements of communities of land cultivators and livestock-breeders in Central Europe. Here, breeding of cattle predominated, and there are grounds to believe that a race bred somewhere in the south was sometimes crossbred with the local aurochs. Communities occupied highly fertile and easily cultivated loess areas but often moved their fields to new localities. That explains the thinness of the cultural levels on the sites of abandoned settlements. Exhausted lands were apparently continually abandoned. In the forest zone, slash-and-burn farming was practised; this is indicated by the great variety of types of stone adzes and axes. Pottery is rather abundantly ornamented with inlays and incised designs, but there is no painting whatever. Early monuments of linear pottery are known in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and northern Yugoslavia. At the

height of their development, cultures of this type were widespread throughout the immense belt stretching from Belgrade to Belgium and from the Paris area to Moldavia. We are apparently dealing here with a special type of cultural complex uniting a whole series of prehistoric cultures connected with different groups of tribes interacting with one another and influenced by their neighbours. However that may be, already in the 5th and 4th millennia B. C. most of the European mainland was inhabited by communities of land cultivators and cattle-breeders.

The great fountainhead of early farming cultures in Europe and the Near East of the 7th to 4th millennia B. C. was not the only one on this planet. In the 5th and 4th millennia B. C., settled farming cultures of the Yang Shao type developed in the Hwang Ho valley in China; characteristic of these was both frame houses and painted pottery. The problem of the origin of the Chinese fountainhead of agriculture, whose cultural traits so closely resemble the Near Eastern and European monuments, has been repeatedly debated in scholarly literature. However, there is no question of identity here, as different plants were cultivated in the two areas, and the population in China belonged to the Mongoloid, not the Caucasoid, type. Objections against independent development of early farming cultures in the New World are even less convincing. The Tihuacan Valley in Mexico provided materials for a detailed study of the origin and development of both maize-based agriculture and of the farming culture that existed between the 6th and 3rd millennia B. C.

The spread of land cultivation and stock-breeding to vast territories and introduction of new tribal groups to these progressive forms of economy was a most important event in world history. The new economic forms created the conditions for the flourishing of the primitive communal system and its basic structures—the community and the division into clans and tribes; on this basis, considerable cultural progress was made. At the same time, latent in the new type of economy were possibilities and premises for the decay of this first socioeconomic formation. Underlying the fine houses, pottery showpieces, and expressive sculpture were certain highly important economic phenomena, and in the first place increased labour productivity which made this cultural upsurge possible. The consequences of these

economic phenomena were first revealed in the south. The southern communities were models of the most rapid cultural and social development; it was here that the primitive communal system declined earlier than anywhere else, and the first class socioeconomic formation took shape. In the 5th and 4th millennia B. C., the valleys of the Nile, the Tigris and the Euphrates became the fountainheads of civilisations.

In Mesopotamia, the founding of the Eridu settlement by the ancient farming tribes signified, in fact, the end of the period of extensive spreading of culture. Particular emphasis was now laid on the intensification of economic activity. Irrigation agriculture in southern Mesopotamia yielded a stable surplus product, while the warm climate permitted the growing of two crops annually. The constant growth of the size of the Eridu shrine may be taken as an indirect indication of the increasing production potential of the ancient communities. In the late 6th and early 5th millennia B. C. that shrine was a simple unpretentious structure with a pedestal for the altar, which differed but little, as did Çatal Hüyük shrines, from ordinary buildings. By the mid-5th millennium, it had grown threefold, and 400 years later we observe a monumental temple built on a high mudbrick platform. At this time, the Ubaid culture takes shape in southern Mesopotamia. The great number of Ubaid monuments warrants the conclusion that a well-developed system of canals was already in use at that time. Terracotta models of shaft-hole axes and various daggers indicate that their metal prototypes were made by casting.

Further development of various industries culminating in the separation of handicrafts from agriculture took place in the mid-4th millennium B. C., during the period of the Uruk culture. Now almost all pottery was made on fast potter's wheels, which could only be efficiently operated by professionals. Settlements had large potters' shops where numerous craftsmen worked. Various metal alloys appeared, including copper and lead fusions. Jewellers formed a separate group of craftsmen; their products now included gold and silver objects and ornaments made of lapis lazuli.

Separation of handicrafts from agriculture led to the development of external and domestic exchange and to the emergence of commodity production. Through commerce, the inhabitants of southern

Mesopotamia obtained ores, construction stone and timber, precious metals and semi-precious stones from the neighbouring regions.

All of this radically changed the nature of the ancient settlements. They grew in size, covering up to 45 hectares. These large settlements, which were centres of agricultural neighbourhoods, of commerce and handicrafts, may be regarded as incipient towns. It was here that most of the surplus product was concentrated and monumental temples were first built. Uruk's White Temple, for instance, rose on a platform 13 metres high and 70 by 66 metres large.

Late in the 4th millennium B.C., writing, yet another evidence of society's high level of development, appeared.

Similar processes were taking place in the Nile valley. Various industries, and in the first place metallurgy, developed here as well. Tools and weapons were made of copper and silver. In the second half of the 4th millennium B.C., during the period known as the Gerzean in archaeology, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture was completed. Ancient tombs indicate the gradual segregation of certain persons from the mass: their tombs were especially magnificent. The walls of one such tomb at Hierakonpolis are covered by painted frescoes representing an armed encounter between two opposing forces. Stone maces covered with reliefs symbolising the power of military chiefs have also been found. Almost simultaneously with southern Mesopotamia, writing came into being here, and the formation of the second, Egyptian, ancient civilisation was completed.

Other fountainheads of southern civilisations are somewhat younger, but they went through basically the same development. In the second half of the 3rd millennium B.C., an early Indian civilisation, the Harappa culture, emerged in the Indus valley. In the early 2nd millennium B.C., a civilisation including the Cretan (Minoan) and Mycenaean cultures evolved in the south of the Balkans. The formation of yet another, early Chinese, fountainhead of civilisation, is dated to the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. Fortified urban-type settlements were built along the middle reaches of the Hwang Ho, where the tombs of privileged persons contain rich funerary gifts as well as evidence of mass human sacrifices. Writing emerged here, too—in the shape

of inscriptions on oracle bones, usually connected with certain economic and political problems.

Basically the same external features of highly developed culture, or civilisation, i.e., writing, monumental structures, specialised handicrafts and urban-type centres, are found in Mesoamerica, though it is true that these traits date to a yet later time here—the last centuries B.C. and the first centuries A.D.

As a rule, our knowledge of these ancient fountainheads of civilisation is derived from archaeological excavations, which mostly provide sound evidence of the material culture of ancient societies. Other types of sources and theoretical considerations show that underlying all these striking developments in culture were changes in society that were just as far-reaching: the moulding of the first civilisations was closely linked with and conditioned by the formation of class relations and of the state.

The basic premise for the formation of class society was socioeconomic—the existence of a regularly obtained surplus product and the possibility of its alienation. The growing complexity of the social structure of primitive society opened up increasing possibilities for uneven distribution of accumulated social wealth. A whole system of social ranks evolved in tribes and tribal confederations—from patriarchs or elders heading extended family communities to the council of chiefs and elders of tribes and tribal confederations. Their power was based on personal authority and regulated by the norms of primitive democracy, but practically it opened up possibilities for personal enrichment. Initially, at least, alienation of the surplus product retained external forms that were traditional for consanguine communities.

It appears that the social structure of early agricultural societies was already fairly complex. As social wealth grew, military conflicts became more frequent, developing into a habitual mode of obtaining wealth. This increased the role and influence of successful military leaders, who attracted a core of warriors personally loyal to them. A privileged social position, along with possession of large property associated with it, gradually became hereditary. The chief's or "royal" clan formed the apex of the social structure, but side by side with it there existed several "noble clans" with their own rights and obligations. To a large extent this was a prototype of the

class structure, novel in content though still traditional in form.

Through gradual adaptation to the new situation, traditional customs developed into direct exploitation. At first, slaves from alien tribes were regarded as a kind of junior household members who had few rights and did the hardest work. It is no accident that in Proto-Sumerian writing a slave was designated as a "man from an alien country". As the frequency of military conflicts and the productivity of individual labour increased, the position of slaves gradually changed—they were deprived of all their rights and degraded to the position of a "speaking tool". Slaves and similar forced labourers formed a separate class, whose emergence clearly indicated the disappearance of primitive equality.

The political structure also changed, as power was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals. The fact that wars turned into a permanent occupation led to the formation of a social structure usually called military democracy, which concluded, as it were, the development of the primitive communal formation. In this society, supreme power was vested in the popular assembly, which elected the council of elders, the whole structure headed by the tribal chief. Where tribal confederations existed, there was a definite hierarchy among the chiefs themselves, who constituted a sort of tribal nobility. The transformed communal municipality fell into the hands of the upper stratum of society; membership of the council was in itself an additional factor in the segregation of the social propertied elite. Along with the division of society into classes, a special coercive apparatus, the state, evolved. Communal administration, closely linked with the norms of primitive democracy, was above all an assembly of authoritative leaders, while state administration was from its very inception coercive power first and foremost. The authority of the state was later asserted by the very possibility of coercion.

Significant changes took place in ideology as well. As the chief's role grew, his position and functions became sacralised, specific attributes of his power appeared, and his cult in this and afterlife evolved. Particularly well developed was the chiefs' cult genetically linked with the ancient traditional ancestor cult. Monumental tombs are a striking indication of the magnificence of such cults.

With the formation of the first class societies and

their development into new cultural systems, civilisations, the unevenness of historical evolution is sharply intensified. The Old and New Worlds now fall into three immense zones. The first of these embraces the southern civilisations which were the first to cross the boundary between the primitive and class formations. They take shape among early agricultural societies, developing at a particularly rapid rate. The second zone includes farming and stock-breeding cultures in which similar processes unfold at slower rate. Finally, the enormous third zone covers various cultural-economic types of hunters, fishermen and gatherers practising various forms of the economy of food appropriation adapted to concrete ecological niches. Mutual influences and, frequently, direct migrations of tribal groups form chains linking up these three great zones, although for such a remote epoch the strength of these connections should not be exaggerated.

The early agricultural *oikoumenē* in the Old World covers several regions in Asia and most of the European continent. The development is most striking in the 5th and 4th millennia in the south of the Balkan peninsula. As the Dhimini excavations have shown, settlements in Thessaly were at that time surrounded by multiple stone walls, with a large building, almost certainly the chief's residence, on a central rise. The Vinča culture, named after an ancient site 14 kilometres from Belgrade, illustrates the high level of the development of early agricultural communities on the territory of Yugoslavia. In recent times, Bulgarian archaeologists have obtained results that are particularly significant for characterising the culture of settled agricultural and livestock-breeding communities which inhabited Bulgaria in the 5th and 4th millennia B. C. The growth in the number of ancient villages obviously points to an increase in the population. True, there are no major centres among the sites so far studied—they are mostly habitations of relatively small communities. On some of the sites, shrines existed. In any case, a group of objects have been found on the Ovcharovo dig which reproduce in miniature the interior appointments of such a cult centre.

Of special importance in the economic basis of early agricultural communities in Bulgaria was the development of specialised handicrafts producing pottery baked in special kilns under high and stable temperatures, and objects of copper, for which the

ore was extracted from special mines. Such a complex technology required the growth within the community of a group of professional craftsmen, whose products, however, were not sold but distributed among the tribesmen who, in their turn, provided the craftsmen with agricultural products. Soviet researchers have called this archaic form of the crafts communal handicrafts. Simultaneously, wealth was accumulated in the hands of the few and tribal nobility arose, as indicated by the finds at an ancient necropolis at Varna, where copper tools and weapons as well as numerous gold ornaments were found. In the 4th millennium B.C., settled communities spread throughout the territory of Moldavia and then farther afield, along the Southern Bug as far as the Dnieper area. The Tripolye culture genetically linked with the ancient agricultural communities of the Balkan peninsula, arose here.

In the 4th and 3rd millennia B.C., agricultural and cattle-breeding tribes settled nearly the whole of Europe, forming a whole system of ancient cultures and their modifications, all at a more or less the same level of development yet markedly lagging behind the highly developed farming communities of the Balkans. Characteristic of the Subalpine zones, for instance, were pile dwelling settlements situated on waterlogged meadows along lakeshores, with houses resting on piles driven into the mud and even the lake bottom.

The British Isles were also absorbed in the zone of the new economy. A type site here is Windmill Hill, whose inhabitants lived in a settlement surrounded by a ditch and a paling. The population of Great Britain was at that time relatively small—about 20,000, according to British archaeologists' estimates. Characteristic of the European agriculture of the temperate zone was slash-and-burn farming, which resulted in wholesale destruction of forests.

The boundary separating the agricultural and cattle-breeding zone from the world of forest hunters and fishermen lay across Europe. The numerous tribes inhabiting the immense territory from Northern Scandinavia and the Eastern Baltic area to the Urals were engaged in hunting and fishing, living in pit dwellings in winter and light shelters in summer. They made point-based and round-based poorly baked pottery ornamented with designs formed by indentations and incisions produced by drawing a toothed ornament across the surface of the soft clay

(comb-and-pit). There are no signs of specialisation of the industries, although some artifacts, in particular figurines of elks, bears and other animals, were made with fine craftsmanship. The consanguine communities of hunters and fishermen were headed by chiefs, while cult rites were in the hands of shamans. The burials of chiefs and shamans are marked by an abundance of ornaments carved out of bone and by staffs crowned with the figure of an elk's head.

In Asia, the region of steppe and semi-desert hunters adjoined the farming cultures. Here belonged the Keltaminar tribes inhabiting, in the 5th and 4th millennia B.C., the steppe of northern Central Asia and southern Kazakhstan. In the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, Keltaminars did some fishing to supplement their game bag. A series of taiga hunters' cultures have been studied by Soviet archaeologists in Siberia. Here, as in the Lake Ladoga area, there are burials of chiefs and shamans marked by relatively rich funerary gifts, but on the whole the cultural and social development lags far behind the farming communities of the South. Of considerable interest are the specialised cultures of fishermen and sea hunters of the Soviet Far East and Japan. Their occupations were conducive to a settled mode of life and a relatively high development of culture and applied arts. A good example are complexes of the Jomon type, which flourished in Japan in the 4th to 2nd millennia B.C. We find here richly ornamented pottery, little terracotta idols, and obvious signs of the initial stages of social differentiation. But the decline of the primitive communal system and the formation of class relations were only completed here under the conditions of advanced agricultural production borrowed from continental Asia in the 1st millennium B.C.

The typical culture of tropical hunters, fishermen and gatherers is the Hoabinh culture of south-east Asia (7th through 4th millennia B.C.), characterised by crude stone and presumably bamboo tools. In principle, the same three basic zones reflecting uneven historical development, intensified with the formation of early class society, may be observed in the New World, too.

The favourable conditions of the life of the early agricultural communities which made up the primordial stratum of the southern civilisations, stand out especially clearly in comparison with the com-



plex picture presented by the development of the bulk of European continental tribes. Only in the extreme south of the continent – on Crete and in the Peloponnese – was the early transition of society to a qualitatively new stage completed. At a certain stage, the neighbouring early agricultural communities began to stagnate and even decline. Thus in the 3rd millennium B.C. most settled villages were abandoned, applied arts degraded, and sedentary life continued only in a few areas, so that the chain of genetic links leading to earlier monuments is now traced with certain difficulty. The changes affected a large area. A number of cultures spread through the temperate zone of Europe, in which agriculture receded into the background making way for stock-breeding, including large-scale sheep-breeding. This might in part be due to climatic changes. Thus both a growth of grassland area in east Hungary and the appearance of the domesticated horse and four-wheeled vehicles here fall on the 3rd millennium B.C. In some situations, stock-breeding may have given a greater surplus product than a mixed land cultivation and stock-breeding economy, which had to be crowded into limited strips of land where soil could be tilled by means of relatively primitive stone, bone or antler tools.

In the steppe zone, cultures of livestock-breeders arose. Of this nature was, for instance, the Pit-Grave culture of the south Russian steppe (3rd millennium B.C.). Characteristic of this culture is a distinctive burial rite: kurgans or barrows visible in the steppe spaces from afar were erected over pit graves. A significant trait of this culture was wide use of the domesticated horse. In the steppe zone, the horse became, rather early, also a cult object, as shown by burials of horses' heads. The human burials of the Pit-Grave culture are not rich in funerary gifts, but they include a remarkable group in which four wooden wheels were placed at the sides of the pit grave. These burials, symbolising a cart taking the dead to the next world, point to the wide use not only of horses but also of four-wheeled vehicles. There is evidence of Pit-Grave tribes migrating west, towards Moldavia and Romania.

The herds and flocks rapidly growing under favourable conditions constituted considerable wealth, which led, at a relatively early stage, to social and economic differentiation in stock-breeding communities. Evidence for this is furnished by

monumental kurgan tombs with rich funerary gifts and complex burial chambers presumably built at the death of tribal nobles. Typical specimens of such burials are found in the culture of Transcaucasian mountain stock-breeders of the late 3rd and early 2nd millennia B.C., where some of the objects, including those made of precious metals, came from the ancient Oriental civilisations. The kurgan burial rite also spread to Central Europe, where it is represented in a number of local subdivisions of a huge cultural community bearing the formidable name of the "battleaxe culture". Indeed, one of the most common finds in these burials is shaft-hole stone axes of exquisite workmanship. These may have been both effective weapons and prestige symbols placed in the graves of prominent warriors and chiefs. Copper objects and amber ornaments also occur in these kurgans. Cultures of this type are spread over an enormous territory from the Rhine to the Volga, presumably reflecting specific traits of extremely diverse tribal groups. Migrations of tribal groups and the formation of hybrid cultures and large cultural communities cannot conceal the fact that the agricultural and stock-breeding communities of Europe were poorer and more backward compared to the ancient Orient and the Aegean world. For a long time, the European mainland was dominated by the primitive communal system while it was going through its concluding stages.

The cardinal changes that led to the disintegration of the primitive communal formation over the greater territory of Eurasia were due to a major technological innovation – bronze metallurgy. With the introduction of various alloys, the quality of metal tools rapidly improved, carpenters and farmers now had stout labour implements, and warriors, excellent weapons. Specialisation of labour increased; advanced metallurgy and metal-working required regular and large-scale mining. Some Bronze Age mines in Europe go nearly a hundred metres down. Another important result of the spreading of bronze objects was greater regularity of exchange and trade. Numerous "merchant's hoards" containing ingots and large quantities of objects of one type point to the appearance of a kind of middlemen traders. During the 2nd millennium B.C. bronze became widespread in various cultures of Europe and Asia. The possibilities for accumulation and alienation of wealth sharply increased,

leading to even more frequent armed conflicts. War more and more became a permanent mode of obtaining wealth, as attested by the development of armouries and the appearance of burials of warriors and military leaders. The start of the epoch of military democracy signified the beginning of the end of the primitive communal formation and created the premises for the replacement of power based on moral authority, that cornerstone of primitive law and order, by power based on coercion.

These changes occurred in diverse natural zones. The great belt of Eurasian steppes and semi-deserts was occupied by nomadic stock-breeding tribes. They formed large and powerful unions, largely moulded by armed force. In the 2nd millennium B. C. such reliable weapons as spears equipped with bronze spearheads and bronze battleaxes appeared. Two vast confederations of stock-breeding tribes of the Bronze Age are known from archaeological materials as Timber-Grave and Andronovo cultures (or cultural communities). The former occupied the East European steppe, the latter, Soviet Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and Southern Siberia. It is not ruled out that this cultural unity over such a great territory points to the existence of ancient social agglomerations that may be called alliances of tribal confederations. An important innovation was the invention of the chariot, whose wheels were not solid, as in the earlier heavy carts, but spoked. These single-axletree mobile vehicles were widely used in military conflicts; their remnants occur in graves where members of tribal nobility were apparently buried – those that formed the special military and social group of charioteers. Finds of bone cheek-pieces of horse bridles point to the beginning of the practice of riding. Timber-Grave tribes, occupying the areas between the Volga and the Don but expanding as far as Moldavia to the west, were at a similar level of development. In the second half of the 2nd millennium B. C. they moved towards the Southern Urals, partly mixing with the Andronovo culture tribes there.

In some cases mere concentration of authority was enough to create outstanding works of culture through elementary cooperation, as illustrated by megalithic structures in Europe, notably by the famous Stonehenge in England – an unusual sun temple in the shape of a gigantic circle of stone steles

with altar stones in the centre. The stone temples of Malta, built on a trefoil ground plan, must have arisen under similar circumstances. In some stone tombs of the 3rd millennium B. C. the roof slabs weigh up to 40 tons, and the weight of some of the stones in these structures, generically called megalithic, is 100 and even 300 tons. It has been proved that the stones for the Stonehenge monument were brought from a distance of about 200 kilometres. Such was the potential of primitive cooperation in a situation where land cultivation and stock-breeding provided a reliable source of food for society, enabling it to free some of the manpower for prestigious construction projects.

Beginning with the second millennium B. C., the prevalent type of such projects in Western Europe were burials of noble persons often called “princely tombs” by archaeologists. Society’s efforts were now directed towards the aggrandisement of chiefs and their families – who would ultimately hold sway over this society. Such tombs now occur in nearly all cultures, as do weapons, signifying the coming of the period of military democracy. Of this nature are the Leibingen barrows in Thuringia, where embankments of stone and earth rise to a height of seven metres and more, and the barrows themselves are 30 metres in diameter. The barrows covered a wooden tomb chamber on a stone platform. Bronze weapons and gold ornaments were placed in the tombs. Sometimes additional burials, possibly of servants or slaves, are found next to the main tomb. Indications of accumulated wealth are finds of hoards of gold objects occurring, for instance, in the Lusatian culture of the 13th and 12th centuries B. C.

Both of these processes – segregation of tribal nobility and militarisation of society – receive a new impetus with the coming of the Iron Age, characterised in Europe by the so-called Hallstatt culture (900 to 500 B. C.). Along the northern borders of the antique civilisation, an intense process of early class society formation goes on. The same process involves the early nomadic tribes known in Europe as Scythians – the direct descendants of the Bronze Age steppe cattle-breeders. Though the ways and rates of the disintegration of primitive society varied, they all had but one result – the replacement of the primitive community by an antagonistic class formation.

## Part II

# Ancient Civilisations of the East

### Chapter 1

#### Ancient Egypt: History and Culture

*Geographical Conditions. Population.* Egypt, one of the first and greatest civilisations, emerged in the Nile valley in north-eastern Africa. The name "Egypt" comes from the Old Greek word *Aigyplos*, most probably derived from Hekuptah—the name of the city which the Greeks later called Memphis. Egyptians themselves called their country Kemi, or "the black land", from the colour of its soil.

The country consisted of two parts. Upper Egypt occupied the territory of the Nile valley from the First Cataract to approximately the place where the river is divided into several branches flowing into the Mediterranean. Ancient Greeks named this area of branching the Delta, from its similarity to the Greek letter. The Delta area was referred to as Lower Egypt.

In antiquity, people spoke of Egypt as the gift of the Nile, for the Nile was the basis of agriculture and of all economic activity. Egypt's geographical situation was very advantageous; it enabled the Egyptians to be self-sufficient in natural resources, complemented by those of the neighbouring lands—a very important advantage indeed. The adjoining mountains were rich in various kinds of stone—granite, diorite, basalt, alabaster, and limestone. There were no metals in Egypt itself, and they were mined in the neighbouring regions: copper, in the Sinai peninsula; gold, in the desert between the Nile and the Red Sea, not far from Egypt; zinc and lead, on the Red Sea coast; while silver and iron were mostly brought from Asia Minor.

The Mediterranean connected Egypt with the eastern Mediterranean coast, Cyprus, the islands of the Aegean and Greece. The Nile was an important

waterway linking Upper and Lower Egypt and the whole country with Nubia.

Egyptians inhabited north-eastern Africa already in hoary antiquity. The Egyptian people was most probably formed as a result of mixing of several members of the Afro-Asian family of peoples which also included peoples speaking Semitic and some other languages.

South of Egypt, the Nile valley was occupied by peoples speaking the languages of the Kushite branch of the Afro-Asian family. Their country was called Cush in antiquity; Greeks and Romans used the name Ethiopia. West of the Nile lived Libyan tribes, which spoke the languages of the Libyan-Berber branch of the Afro-Asian languages. In ancient times, they were hunters, livestock-breeders and farmers.

*Sources.* Egyptology as a science emerged in 1822, when Jean-François Champollion, the great French scholar, decyphered Old Egyptian writing. Archaeological excavations, begun in the first half of the 19th century, yielded domestic utensils, labour implements, remarkable art objects, and highly interesting written monuments.

The most ancient inscriptions, which are especially valuable, belong to the times of the Early Kingdom. Of great significance for the history of the Old Kingdom is a chronicle excerpts from which have survived on fragments of a large diorite slab called the Palermo Stone. It records the names of the first pharaohs and the most important events of their reign. Of great interest are the biographical inscrip-

tions on the walls of tombs of high officials from the times of the Fourth Dynasty, as well as inscriptions on the walls of burial chambers in the royal pyramids of the Fifth and Sixth Dynasties—the so-called “pyramid texts”. Literary monuments containing data on Egypt’s economic and cultural links with Syria and Palestine are extremely important, too, as are numerous Instructions, expounding the rules of practical wisdom, and Prophecies, whose information about popular uprisings is very valuable for the historian.

Numerous official documents found at Deir el-Medina near Thebes, Egypt’s ancient capital, have survived from the times of the New Kingdom. Some of the finds contain accounts of military expeditions to the Near East and Nubia. Of special value is the chronicle of pharaoh Tuthmosis III’s expeditions inscribed on the wall of the Amon temple at Thebes, in which these expeditions are described in the order of his years of reign.

During excavations at el-Amarna, the ruins of the city of Akhetaton, pharaoh Akhenaton’s capital, were discovered, which give a graphic picture of the city—its palaces, streets, and workshops. A large archive of diplomatic documents from the 14th century B. C. was also found here. It contains some 400 letters in Akkadian sent to Egyptian pharaohs by Babylonian, Assyrian, Mitannian and Hittite kings, as well as by rulers of the cities of the eastern Mediterranean. Of particular interest is the text of the treaty, in Egyptian and Hittite, between the Egyptian pharaoh Ramses II and the Hittite king Hattushili III.

Howard Carter, the well-known British archaeologist, found the furniture of the royal palace in the four rooms of Tutankhamen’s tomb, and also the famous richly embellished mummy of the pharaoh himself, along with numerous valuable art monuments whose magnificence and perfect workmanship still seem staggering.

Also important are literary works of the New Kingdom (“Tale of the Two Brothers”, etc.) and the religious and mystical works known as the *Book of the Dead*.

Numerous business and official documents have survived, from the Saïte period (7th-6th centuries B. C.) such as marriage contracts, lease contracts, deeds of the sale of houses, cattle, etc. In the late 4th and early 3rd centuries B. C., Manetho, an Egyptian

priest, published a history of his country in Greek drawing on local sources. Unfortunately, that valuable work has only been preserved in fragments cited by other authors. Manetho’s division of the history of Egypt into 30 dynasties is still largely accepted in Egyptology.

*Egypt in the Early Period.* Man settled the Nile valley very early. Importantly Egypt was not isolated from the rest of the world. There is ample evidence of imports of timber, obsidian and various products, such as Palestine pottery and Mesopotamian seals from the so-called Jamdat Nasr period.

Copper tools, widespread in Egypt, were made without additions of tin. Iron was known, but for a long time it had no economic significance. Copper tools made possible the exploitation of the Nile and the distribution of water for irrigation. As the irrigation system developed, agriculture became predominant everywhere, and labour products in excess of the needs of the labourers themselves were accumulated, which led to the appropriation of other people’s labour by tribal chiefs and their retinue.

Egyptologists usually divide the history of ancient Egypt into periods known as Kingdoms—Early Dynastic, Old, Middle, New and Late. Before the formation of the state, Egypt was divided into dozens of separate areas designated by the Greek word “nome”. Later, two kingdoms, Upper and Lower Egypt, emerged as a result of unification of the nomes. After a long and bitter struggle, the Upper Egyptian kingdom gained the upper hand, and the two parts became a single state, but the exact date of this event is so far unknown. From the available data it may be assumed that c. 3000 B. C. a unified state already existed in the Nile valley. The chronology of Egypt’s early history is known only in general outline, and it has to be reckoned in dynasties, not the years of reign of this pharaoh or the other.

Egypt’s pharaohs wore two crowns of a distinctive type, a white one and a red one, symbolising royal authority over Upper and Lower Egypt respectively.

The ancient tradition, reflected in the so-called Turin Canon and in the Abydos list of kings, names Menes as the first king of Egypt, and it is with Menes that Manetho begins his First Dynasty. Unfortunately, no texts have survived from those times, yet

scholars believe that it was under Menes that the country became united in a single kingdom. Only one monument from before the First Dynasty speaks of a victory over Lower Egypt won by a king named Narmer. Some Egyptologists have suggested that Narmer and Menes are one and the same person, and that Narmer was Menes's second name (pharaohs are known to have used several names). It is more correct to assume, we believe, that Egypt was united long before the First Dynasty, as two rulers had been kings of all Egypt before Narmer and had worn two crowns. According to this conjecture, Narmer's reign preceded Menes's enthronement.

A monument in honour of Narmer's victory recounts his feats. On one side of the monument he is portrayed as wearing the crown of Upper Egypt. Narmer has raised one hand holding a mace to hit at an enemy already struck down, his other hand holds the foe by the hair. On the reverse side Narmer is already wearing the crown of Lower Egypt and stepping towards ten beheaded men.

During Narmer's reign, a system of writing and a strong centralised state organisation were already in existence. According to a legend recounted by Herodotus, Menes founded the capital of the united state at the juncture of the Delta and the Nile, raising a dam south of the future city's site to protect it against floods. That city was Memphis. From here, it was convenient to rule both the South and the North of the country. Under the Second Dynasty Memphis was already the capital of all Egypt, although the name itself appears in texts only in the New Kingdom.

During two centuries, beginning approximately with 3000 B. C., Egypt was ruled by two dynasties from This, a city in Upper Egypt near Abydos.

Egyptian expansion began already under the kings of the First Dynasty – south into Ethiopia, west into Libya, and east into the Sinai peninsula. Under the pharaohs of the Second Dynasty, troubles started in Egypt itself. Pharaoh Khasekhem finally united the country in a single centralised state, severely punishing the rebels in northern Egypt. Two of his statues show Egypt symbolically struck down, while the inscriptions on these statues put the number of dead at 48,205 in one case and 47,209 in the other. (Such precise records cannot of course be fully trusted.)

Pharaohs were deified already in the early period.

They added the title of the god Horus to their name, implying that they were terrestrial incarnations of that deity.

One of the most important functions of the royal power in Egypt was the organisation and maintenance of an irrigation network in the Nile valley. Already in the early period the country was covered by a system of irrigation canals and dams, and the land yielded good crops of cereals. Countless wine vessels found in Lower Egypt show that viticulture flourished. There was a great deal of livestock in the country. A large and well-organised crown estate emerged. Monuments of the early epoch bear pictures of enslaved prisoners of war, with their hands bound. The sources record that during the suppression of troubles in Lower Egypt 120,000 prisoners were taken in the reign of a pharaoh of the First Dynasty. Ancient Egyptians used the term "the living killed" for enslaved prisoners. Egyptian grave goods provide evidence of far-reaching social differentiation of society. Kings and nobles were buried in baked brick tombs, while the common people had to be content with mere pits.

Weaving made considerable advances. The making of papyrus for writing also began. That invention, which helped the spread of writing, was of exceptional importance; it survived the Egyptian civilisation by ages, influencing the culture of later epochs: it was known in the Graeco-Roman world and in medieval Europe.

*The Old Kingdom.* During the Old Kingdom, Egypt was ruled by pharaohs of the Third through Eighth Dynasties (c. 2700–c. 2300). The country was finally unified in a single political and economic whole, a large centralised state embracing the whole of Egypt and extending its influence to the Sinai peninsula and southern Palestine in the east and to northern Ethiopia in the south.

The population's main occupation was agriculture. The vegetables known at that period were onions, garlic and cucumbers. Numerous gardens were concentrated in Lower Egypt. Poultry farming and fishing flourished in the marshes of the Delta. Egyptians were the first to practise apiculture. Succulent meadows and other grazing lands offered wide possibilities for stock-breeding. An interesting feature of the latter was the keeping of livestock

together with desert animals, such as antelopes and gazelles. Grain—mostly barley and a primitive variety of wheat called “emmer”—was Upper Egypt’s principal wealth. Part of grain yield was taken in ships to the north of the country. Thus the two parts of the country economically complemented one another.

Pharaohs granted rich gifts of land to temples and nobles. The estates of such nobles, who filled important posts at court and in the state mechanism, were scattered throughout Lower and Upper Egypt. Farmers, gardeners, shepherds, hunters, bird-catchers, fishermen, etc., are pictured on the walls of the Old Kingdom tombs as working for the magnates. A magnate’s estate was run by a manager, with scribes, measurers and counters of grain working under him. The nobles also possessed workshops where craftsmen worked in copper, gold, and stone; carpenters, joiners, and bakers also toiled on their estates.

Ordinary people also had land which was at their full disposal. There are records showing that as early as the Third or Fourth Dynasties they could sell or give away their land or leave it to their relatives in a will. In some cases small landowners were compelled to sell their land to highly placed officials. On parents’ death land was inherited by their children. Land could also be made a gift of, to buy cult services for the dead.

Handicrafts flourished. Craftsmen contracted to build tombs for payment in kind. The potter’s wheel became widespread, and pottery was produced in large quantities.

Evidence of social differentiation is found, among other sources, in an inscription made by a certain nomarch (governor) who insists that he gave his barley and milk to the hungry, buried the poor, and paid the loan of an insolvent debtor. Society consisted of high officials, the middle strata of free population (small royal officials, lower priests, free artisans, and landowners), workers on crown estates, and slaves who were mostly war captives. Slaves of Egyptian extraction also appeared, reduced to slavery when they could not pay their debts.

The pharaoh wielded immense power, of which the material basis was large resources of land, manpower and food. Egypt developed into a centralised despotic state relying on a bureaucratic machine covering the whole of the country. After the phar-

aoh, the first person in the state machine was the supreme potentate, who was simultaneously the supreme judge and directed the work of several departments.

The kings waged constant wars. It is known, for instance, that during an expedition to Ethiopia led by Sneferu, the first pharaoh of the Fourth Dynasty, 7,000 prisoners and 200,000 head of cattle were taken as booty; 1,100 prisoners were captured during the Libyan campaign. During the Fourth Dynasty, several copper mines in the Sinai peninsula were seized by Egypt. Trading expeditions were sent to Ethiopia in quest of perfumes, ebony, incense, etc. Cedar was brought from the Phoenician city of Byblos to Egypt by sea. Domestic trade also developed. Products were bartered, with prices mostly set in grain, which was the usual measure of value. Copper ingots were sometimes used as a monetary unit.

Characteristic of the Old Kingdom was a rapid growth of construction of stone buildings, which began with the erection of the stepped pyramid by Djoser, a king of the Third Dynasty. This 60-metre-high pyramid is situated near the modern village of Sakkara in the vicinity of Cairo. An inscription recorded the name of its architect, Imhotep. Pharaoh Sneferu built two vast pyramids, 100 and 99 metres high. Under Sneferu’s son Cheops the pharaoh’s power reached a peak, unsurpassed in that period. The Cheops pyramid near the modern settlement of Giza (close to Cairo) is 146.5 metres high, each side of it is more than 230 metres long, and its base area equals 52,900 square metres. Some 2,300,000 polished blocks weighing about 2.5 tons each were used in its construction. The quality of the work was extremely high. The huge blocks were cut, polished and joined with great precision.

Under Cheops’s son Chephren a pyramid was erected that was three metres lower than the Great Pyramid but surpassed it in the magnificence of its facing. The pyramid of Mycerinus, Chephren’s successor, was lower (66 metres) and signified a decline in pyramid construction. Adjoining the pyramids was a whole “city of the dead”—a cemetery for king’s highest officials, where huge stone tombs formed streets crossing at right angles.

The construction of the immense pyramids for the pharaohs’ eternal rest strained the people’s resources to the utmost. Economically, the country was exhausted, the power of the pharaohs declined, and



social conflicts became irreconcilable. Egypt began to disintegrate into semi-independent nomes headed by local governors. By the end of the Sixth Dynasty, the Old Kingdom faced imminent downfall. The whole of the country was in the grip of unrest. The 70 pharaohs of the next, Seventh Dynasty, ruled for just 70 days.

*The Middle Kingdom.* The Middle Kingdom period began at the end of the 3rd millennium and ended c. 1600 B. C. In that epoch, the country was ruled by nine dynasties, from the Ninth Dynasty to the Seventeenth.

By the end of the 3rd millennium Egypt's economic situation made the unification of the country and establishment of administrative order absolutely necessary, since the irrigation system had fallen into disrepair during the troubled times at the end of the Old Kingdom, and famine began.

Two unifying centres, whose nomarchs claimed the Egyptian throne, became prominent at the time. One was the city of Heracleopolis situated in the north of the country, in a fertile valley not far from the Fayum oasis, on the western bank of the Nile. At about the year 2160 Achthoes, the nomarch of Heracleopolis, vigorously began to extend his dominion, subordinating the semi-independent nomarchs of the nearby regions and repulsing Asiatic nomads. Gradually he succeeded in extending his rule over all Egypt.

Simultaneously with Achthoes the nomarch of Thebes also laid claims to the throne. The rulers of Heracleopolis and Thebes came into conflict, each trying to unite the country under his own power. The Theban nomarch Mentuhotpe emerged victorious, founding the Eleventh Dynasty (21st century B. C.). A relief portrays him as victor over Egyptians, Ethiopians, Asiatics, and Libyans.

The Middle Kingdom reached its efflorescence between the year 2000 and early 18th century B. C. In that period, Egyptians waged wars with neighbouring countries and finally subjugated northern Ethiopia; they also resumed an active foreign policy towards Syria and Palestine.

The king's mainstay was the army, recruited through selective call-up of young men. The army was run by the nomarchs, whose power was seen as hereditary. Besides, the king had an army of his own.

From the social standpoint, pharaohs relied above all on the higher officials, some of whom were not of noble extraction at all and owed their position exclusively to the king's power. The large estates of the Old Kingdom's metropolitan potentates gave way to medium and small holdings. Slave-owning among private individuals, including ordinary people, became widespread. However, the main source of manpower for the estates of the king, the nobles and well-to-do private individuals was not slaves but dependent landowners who were called the "king's men".

During the Middle Kingdom, agriculture achieved considerable progress, largely due to the fact that a large irrigation system was constructed in the Fayum oasis. A large water reservoir was built there connected by a canal with the Nile. Large areas of the Fayum nome could now be irrigated.

Unlike the large estates of the Old Kingdom, small and medium holdings were unable to produce all the necessities, but there was a surplus of some products, which stimulated commodity-money relations. Many foreign goods were brought into the country; incidentally, foreign trade was the king's monopoly. Copper was the principal measure of value, although grain remained an important medium of the trading operations. At the beginning of the Middle Kingdom silver was valued more than gold, while at the end, it was twice as cheap as gold.

During the Middle Kingdom there were signs of considerable advances in the development of productive forces and improvement of agricultural implements. Some tools were now made of bronze, though most were still of copper. Besides, stone tools (flint axes, knives, etc.) were still in use. A new craft, glass-blowing, developed.

The copper deposits in the Sinai peninsula were worked intensely; at the beginning of the Twelfth Dynasty, the mines of northern Ethiopia began to be exploited.

During the Middle Kingdom, a major popular rebellion took place in Egypt. It was caused by acute social contradictions described in the well-known work "Instruction for King Merykare". The popular uprising is also recorded in "The Lamentations and Prophecies of Ipuwer" and "The Prophecy of Neferty", presumably dating to the 18th century B. C. These sources narrate that the rebellion led to a redistribution of property; the poor man who ear-

lier had no sandals even became the owner of treasures; the country turned round like a potter's wheel; he who had been unable to build a coffin for himself became the owner of a tomb; jewelry appeared on the necks of women slaves; laws were trampled, and there was no royal power in the country.

The trouble-stricken state could not defend itself against the external enemy. Egypt fell prey to the Hyksos tribes who, late in the 18th century B. C., invaded Egypt from Palestine and gradually reached Memphis. The Hyksos rule continued for about a hundred years, yet legends of these terrible times were alive throughout the ancient history of Egypt. But the Hyksos were disunited and therefore unable to found a strong empire.

*Egypt during the New Kingdom.* Theban rulers remained more or less independent of the Hyksos and led the fight against them. One of the Theban rulers, Amosis I, the founder of the Eighteenth Dynasty, captured Avaris, the Hyksos fortress in north-eastern Egypt, and brought the fight against them to a victorious conclusion. Thus began the New Kingdom period of some 500 years (1580-1085 B. C.) in which Egypt was ruled by the Eighteenth through Twentieth Dynasties and gradually achieved supremacy in the Near East.

Under pharaoh Tuthmosis I (the second half of the 16th century B. C.) Egypt became especially powerful. In the south of the country, the frontier was moved beyond the Nile's Third Cataract. Tuthmosis I undertook an expedition to the Euphrates and destroyed the Mitanni state in northern Mesopotamia.

After the death of Tuthmosis I, the throne was inherited by his son Tuthmosis II. On the latter's death his widow Hatshepsut seized power, keeping at the beginning of her reign Tuthmosis III, her young stepson and heir to the throne, as the nominal ruler (c. 1500 B. C.), and later openly declaring herself a pharaoh. After her death, Tuthmosis III destroyed all her portraits to exterminate the memory of the hated stepmother. Tuthmosis III went on numerous campaigns against Syria and Palestine, and his kingdom extended from the Fourth Cataract of the Nile to the northern border of Syria.

At about 1400 B. C. Amenhotep IV ascended to the throne. His reign was marked by important reforms. Relying on the higher officialdom, he endeavoured to consolidate his power. The capital of the state was moved from Thebes, the stronghold of the old aristocracy, which Amenhotep IV pushed into obscurity, to a newly built city between Thebes and Memphis (now Tell el-Amarna). One state cult was introduced—the worship of the ancient pharaonic deity, though not as the former god but as the sun's disc under the name of Aton. Accordingly, Amenhotep called himself Akhenaton, or Ikhnaton, that is, "it pleases Aton". Gifts of lands, cattle and artisans' workshops were made to the Aton temple. This was a powerful blow against the priesthood. The cults of old traditional gods became unpopular, as formerly generous state support for them was withdrawn. Ikhnaton's religious reform involved all aspects of society's life and culture, as old traditions were forgotten and the new religion was cultivated. But when the pharaoh died, a gradual departure from the religious reforms began under his two immediate successors. Smenkhkare, Ikhnaton's heir, restored the cult of the old god Amon, and under the next pharaoh, Tutankhamen, the Aton cult was deprived of state support.

The Nineteenth Dynasty, founded by Ramses I, began a series of long wars with the Hittites over the dominion in Syria. In 1304, Ramses II, who had earlier ruled jointly with his father, became king. In 1300, the famous battle with the Hittites near the Syrian city of Qadesh was fought, with about 20,000 men fighting on each side. This battle is known in detail, as it was described in verse and pictures on the walls of a temple built by Ramses II. True, the description reflects only the Egyptian side and should therefore be taken with a grain of salt. While Ramses was discussing the tactics to be adopted in the coming battle in military council, the Hittites attacked. Before that, they had sent two scouts into the Egyptians' camp, who posed as deserters and assured Ramses that the king of the Hittites was retreating in fear. Believing that report, Ramses rushed forward at the head of a relatively small force. He found himself in a very dangerous position, as his party was crushed and scattered by a sudden attack of Hittite chariots. The Egyptians were not completely routed only because the Hittites, assured of their victory, broke off the pursuit to plunder the

enemy's abandoned camp. Meanwhile the bulk of the Egyptian army appeared on the scene to succour its pharaoh.

In his description of the battle Ramses claims victory, but that claim is hardly justified. In any case the Egyptians failed to take the city of Qadesh, and the Hittites, led by their king Muwatallish, pursued the retreating Egyptians. The war continued for a long time after, until Ramses II, in the 21st year of his reign, concluded a peace treaty with the new Hittite king, Hattusili II. The original text of the treaty was recorded on silver tablets, but copies of it in Egyptian and Hittite have survived.

Soon the power of the pharaohs began to decline, ultimately becoming merely nominal. The south of the country fell into the hands of Theban high priests.

The New Kingdom was a period of Egypt's further economic development. It fell within the Bronze Age, although stone tools continued in use owing to the expensiveness of copper. A number of iron artifacts have been preserved since those times, but as late as the beginning of the 18th century B. C. iron was seen as a precious metal, almost, and some of the iron artifacts found are mounted on gold.

Horticulture became an important branch of agriculture. Pomegranate, apples, myrrh were grown. Agricultural tools were markedly improved. In particular, sweeps were used in horticulture for watering trees, and also for irrigating high-lying fields not reached by the Nile's water during natural floods. That enabled farmers to extend the area of fertile land.

More positive knowledge was accumulated at that period. The water clock was invented, and the art of mummification attained a level never surpassed. Glass was produced in great quantity, and the craft of glass-blowing developed.

Horses and camels came to be widely used. There was a marked growth in private estates. Endeavouring to restrict the power of the nobility, the kings sought support among broader sections of the free population.

Slave-owning became widespread as never before. Artisans and other simple folk often possessed slaves. The number of slaves was naturally greatest on crown and temple estates. The sources show that Amenhotep II, one of the pharaohs of the Eighteenth Dynasty, brought back 89,600 prisoners from

his Syrian campaign. Considerable numbers of captives went to the temples. For instance, during his thirty-year rule Ramses III, a pharaoh of the Twentieth Dynasty, gave more than 100,000 prisoners from Syria, Palestine and Ethiopia to the temples, according to surviving records, and also about 500,000 head of cattle and more than a million *aruras* (one *arura* equals 0.2 hectare) of arable land. Tutmosis III gave a present of 1,588 prisoners of war from Syria to a temple in the capital Thebes.

The common people were heavily oppressed. There were repeated censuses, so that new taxes and duties could be imposed. The sources contain a wealth of information on the craftsmen engaged in servicing the afterlife cult, in the building and finishing of the tombs. Masons, plasterers, painters, carpenters and joiners, copper-smiths, and potters worked here. The craftsmen were paid by the state in kind—in grain, fish, vegetables and other food-stuffs. Some materials show that during the Twentieth Dynasty the state often delayed these payments, and the craftsmen stopped work. This seems to be the earliest report of strikes so far available.

Trading was highly developed under the New Kingdom. Even private individuals and temples had merchants in their service, but money circulation was still rudimentary. The principal value standard was silver, although gold was also used for that purpose.

*Egypt in the 11th-6th Centuries B. C.* By the beginning of the 11th century, two kingdoms arose in Egypt: the Lower Egyptian Kingdom with the capital Tanis in the north-eastern part of the Delta, and the Upper Egyptian Kingdom, with the capital Thebes. By that time, Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine had already thrown off Egyptian rule, and Egypt's northern half was swamped by Libyan military settlers headed by their chiefs, who formed alliances with the local Egyptian nobles. Sheshonq I, one of the Libyan military leaders, founded the Twenty-second Dynasty in the mid-10th century B. C. But his power, just as that of his successors, was not strong, and under the Libyan pharaohs of the 9th and 8th centuries B. C. Lower Egypt disintegrated into a number of separate provinces.

At the end of the 8th century B. C. the Ethiopian king Piankhi seized a large part of Upper Egypt, including Thebes. The influential local priests sup-

ported the Ethiopians, hoping to restore their own dominant position with their help, but Tefnachte, the ruler of the city of Sais in Lower Egypt succeeded in uniting the forces opposed to the invasion with Libyans' help. Memphis also rose against the Ethiopians. In three battles, however, the Ethiopians routed Tefnachte's army and, advancing north, reached Memphis, which they took by storm. Tefnachte had to surrender at the victors' discretion.

The next Ethiopian king to rule Egypt was Shabako. According to a legend related by Manetho, he captured Lower Egypt's pharaoh Bocchoris and burned him alive. In 671 B. C., the Assyrian king Esarhaddon defeated the army of the Ethiopian pharaoh Taharqa and seized Memphis. But Assyrian power in Egypt was not stable, and the next Assyrian king, Assurbanipal, again had to fight the Ethiopians, finally driving them south in 667 B. C. Necho, the nomarch of Sais and Memphis, who had negotiated with Taharqa before Assurbanipal's move, was put in irons and sent to Assyria. But Assurbanipal pardoned him, and even gave him fine clothes to wear and restored him to his former office of nomarch.

In 664 B. C. Taharqa died, and his successor Tanutamoni tried to seize Lower Egypt. At Thebes and other cities he was received by the inhabitants with delight. In Memphis, an Assyrian garrison locked the gates but had to surrender after an unsuccessful sally. Soon, however, a new Assyrian army arrived, and the Ethiopians withdrew to the south. Thebes, which had supported the Ethiopians, was sacked, and many of its citizens were driven into captivity.

Egypt was freed and united by Psammetichus I, founder of the Twenty-sixth (Saite) Dynasty, who was probably Necho's son. At the beginning of his rule (664 B. C.), Thebes was still in Ethiopian hands. Using Ionian and Carian mercenaries, Psammetichus seized Thebes in 655 B. C. and united all Egypt under his rule.

The next pharaoh, Necho II, tried to assert his dominion over Syria. In 608 B. C., Josiah, king of Judah, met the Egyptian army at Megiddo, a city in northern Palestine, but was mortally wounded. After that Judah had to pay a heavy tribute in gold and silver to the Egyptian pharaoh. But Egyptian rule over Syria and Palestine lasted only three years, and in 605 the Egyptian army was driven back to

the border by the Babylonians. Under Apries (589-570 B. C.), one of Psammetichus I's successors, Egypt supported Judah in its struggle against Babylon. Apries won a naval battle against the fleet of the Phoenician city of Tyre and the island of Cyprus, and thereupon undertook a campaign against Sidon, one of Phoenicia's largest cities. In 586, an Egyptian army appeared at the walls of Jerusalem, but was defeated by the Babylonians.

By that time, Hellenes had founded the state of Cyrene on the Mediterranean coast west of Egypt. Deciding to conquer it, Apries sent a strong army against it, which was, however, defeated by the Greeks. The Egyptian army rebelled against Apries, and Amasis (570-526 B. C.) was declared king.

The Saite Dynasty mostly relied on foreign mercenaries (Ionian Greeks, Carians and Palestinians). Most of the warriors were of Libyan extraction.

Saite pharaohs were also strongly supported by the temples, which owned immense tracts of land. That land was usually leased, and the lease-holders could leave it to their heirs. Temples played a great role in the country's economy, particularly in the sphere of money circulation. Silver, used as the value standard, had a guarantee of good quality when it came from temples' treasuries. Numerous officials of the Saite times sought positions as priests as these gave them access to temple property.

The 7th and 6th centuries B. C. were a period of rapid development of productive forces. Tools were now made of iron, which greatly facilitated economic progress.

After Amasis's death, Egypt was ruled by Psammetichus III, but his reign lasted less than a year. In 525 B. C. Cambyses II, king of Persia, went to war against Egypt. The Persian army was supported by the Phoenician fleet. Cyprus, a dependency of Egypt, took Cambyses's side, the Cypriot fleet rendering Cambyses effective assistance. Cambyses concentrated his army in Palestine. Bedouins of the Sinai desert became Cambyses's allies and helped his army to cross the arid territory and reach Pelusium, an Egyptian frontier city. Phanes, commander of Greek and Carian mercenaries in the service of the Egyptian pharaoh Psammetichus, betrayed the latter and fled to the Persians, bringing valuable information about the enemy's military preparations.

The Egyptian army awaited the Persian host at Pelusium. In the ensuing battle (525 B. C.) both

sides suffered heavy losses, but the Persians emerged victorious. The remnants of the Egyptian army and the mercenaries fled in confusion to Memphis.

Now the whole of Egypt was in the hands of the Persians. The Libyan tribes living west of Egypt, as well as the Greeks of Cyrene and the city of Barca, voluntarily submitted to Cambyses and brought him gifts.

At the end of August 525 B. C. Cambyses was officially recognised as the king of Egypt. He founded a new dynasty of Egypt's pharaohs—the Twenty-seventh. As official Egyptian sources show, Cambyses disguised his annexation as a personal union with the Egyptians—he was crowned according to the local custom and adopted the traditional titles of Egyptian kings. He participated in religious ceremonies at the temple of the goddess Neith in Sais, made sacrifices to Egyptian gods and rendered them other honours. Cambyses continued the policies of the Twenty-sixth Dynasty and tried to win the Egyptians over to his side. To legalise his seizure of Egypt, legends were spread about matrimonial links between Persian kings and Egyptian princesses: Cambyses was said to be born of the marriage of his father Cyrus II and the Egyptian princess Nitetis, daughter of pharaoh Apries.

*Egyptian Culture.* Egyptian culture traversed a long path during the several millennia of its development. Its distinguishing features were a highly developed writing system, major achievements in mathematics, astronomy and medicine, splendid architectural monuments, and masterpieces of literature and art.

The Egyptian system of writing evolved already during the Early Kingdom period, and on the eve of the First Dynasty (c. 3000 B. C.) all the principal types of signs and methods of their combination were already in use. In scientific literature, the signs of the Egyptian script are called by the Greek term “hieroglyphics”, or “sacred writing”. They looked like drawings of living beings and various objects, and each drawing denoted the word corresponding to the given object. Sounds were conveyed by hieroglyphics designating like-sounding names of objects. Only consonants were taken into account. For instance, the symbol for bread (t in Egyptian) denoted at the same time the consonant t. Since each of the 24 Early Egyptian consonants was denoted by a spe-

cial sign, it would have been possible to write in letters only, but the Egyptians never adopted the alphabetic system of writing. Already by the beginning of the First Dynasty a mixed script had been elaborated, with words noted down both in pictorial and phonetic signs. During the first two dynasties and later, ink and long reed brushes were used for writing. The early development of writing in Egypt was due to its use in state records and correspondence, and on large estates. Apart from the numerous scribes, high officials were also sometimes skilled in writing.

At about the year 700 B. C., the so-called Demotic (literally “popular”) writing evolved in northern Egypt from the former business-correspondence cursive. Its emergence was necessitated by the growing need for keeping all kinds of business records in connection with the development of commodity-money relations.

Under the first dynasties, each year of the reign of a pharaoh was given a name after some remarkable event that occurred in that year. The names of the years were entered in a chronicle. A continuous chain of such records began with the First Dynasty, whereas before that the list merely gave the rulers' names. The earliest of all known circumstantial annual records date from the times of Sneferu, the first king of the Fourth Dynasty. At the beginning of the Nineteenth Dynasty, the famous Turin Canon was compiled or copied, listing in detail the pharaohs' reigns with exact chronological data.

Time was reckoned in years divided into months and days. From the First Dynasty, or probably even earlier, annual records were kept of the level of the Nile's floods, on which the country's economic well-being depended.

Arithmetic was highly developed already at the time of the Early Kingdom due to the need to keep records in the state apparatus and on noblemen's estates. At the beginning of the First Dynasty Egyptians could handle large numbers up to a million. The scale of notation was basically decimal. Our principal sources on Old Egyptian mathematics are the Rhind Mathematical Papyrus from the British Museum and the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus which was studied by Academician V. V. Struve, the outstanding Soviet scholar. These monuments contain numerous arithmetical problems showing that during the Middle Kingdom the Egyptians

were conversant with the four arithmetical operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, with fractions and the system of decimal notation. Egyptian mathematicians were also able to find the root of a number and square a number, they knew proportions and geometrical progressions.

The tasks of practical geometry included finding the area and volume of various geometric figures—rectangles, circles, cylinders, etc. It follows that the Egyptians knew the correlation between the angles and sides of the right triangle. Among other problems, the Moscow Mathematical Papyrus contains a very interesting calculation of the volume of a truncated pyramid.

The need to calculate the periods of the Nile's floods stimulated the development of Egyptian astronomy. Years were counted by observing the star Sirius, whose appearance in the morning coincided with the beginning of the annual flood.

According to the Egyptians, a year consisted of three seasons, each of which included four months of 30 days each. Apart from these 360 days, five more were added to the calendar. Thus a calendar year differed but insignificantly from a natural year (consisting of 365.25 days), the margin of error being one day in four years.

The Egyptians made great advances in medicine. There were doctors specialising in the treatment of eyes, teeth, etc. Fragments from a book of medical instructions for the treatment of gynaecological diseases and another on animal diseases have survived since the Middle Kingdom. One of the medical books from the New Kingdom gives a detailed description of blood circulation. Fragments of a MS on the treatment of wounds (e. g., skull fracture or damage to the mouth cavity) has also survived from that time. The achievements of Egyptian medicine are also attested by the fact that Egyptian mummies prepared several millennia ago have been well preserved to the present, and the secret of their making has not yet been fully unravelled.

The sun, symbolising life, warmth and light, was regarded as the state god and the chief protector of the pharaohs. From the Old Kingdom onwards the pharaohs erected temples in honour of the sun.

The city of Iunu, which the Greeks later called the City of the Sun (Heliopolis), was the centre of sun worship. The cult of Ra, the sun-god, was one of the principal cults in Egypt. Gradually, the cult of the

god Horus merged with the Ra cult; Horus was usually depicted in the form of a hawk, the protector of royal power, or as a sun disc with bird's wings. Later, during the Middle Kingdom, when Thebes became the capital of Egypt, the local Theban god Amon was declared to be the supreme deity of all Egypt under the name of Amon-Ra, absorbing the Ra cult along with several local sun cults. During the New Kingdom, Amon was regarded as the protector of the pharaohs' power, and his cult was the principal ideological support of the king, who was seen as Amon's son. Under pharaoh Ikhnaton, the Amon cult gave way to the cult of Aton, the life-giving sun disc, as the state religion.

The pharaoh was regarded as the living likeness of the sun-god. The deification of royal power was an important trait of Egyptian religion throughout its existence.

Apart from the state god, each city had a tutelary god of its own, and often several gods.

The cult of the god Osiris was also connected with that of royal power. Whereas the sun was the god of the living pharaoh, Osiris was the god or the prototype of the dead one. Underlying the worshipping of Osiris was the farmers' deification of the annually dying and rising forces of nature, the personification of floods bringing fresh strength to the vegetation. Beginning with the late Old Kingdom, any dead person could be regarded as Osiris and acquire his merits through magic to continue existence in the next world. Initially, Osiris was the local god of the cities of Busiris and Abydos, but later it became a very popular deity throughout Egypt.

Characteristic of the Egyptians was a well-developed afterlife cult. They believed that death was not the destruction of man but merely his transition to the next world. To enable man to continue existence after death, the body had to be preserved by mummification. Mummification was known already in the Old Kingdom, although at that time the art was only rudimentary. For the dead man to continue life in the next world, he was also provided with a tomb, food, drink and various utensils. Huge pyramids were built for the kings. The common people could not afford tombs. Those who had no tombs and made no provision for sacrifices after death stood in danger of suffering from hunger and thirst in the next world.

From the earliest times, animal cults were highly



developed in Egypt. Numerous gods were worshipped in the guise of animals believed to be incarnations of these deities. Such cults were especially widespread in the late (Saïte) times, from which whole cemeteries of mummified sacred animals have survived. For example, the sacred bull Apis was worshipped in Memphis, and his cult was strongly supported by the state.

During the Saïte and subsequent periods there was an emphasis on the ancient cult of Neith, the protectress of Sais and of Egyptian kings.

According to ancient Egyptian beliefs, man was endowed with several souls. One of the souls was the person's "double", believed to be his spiritual element. Signs of the faith in the existence of a person's double seen as his soul are found already in inscriptions from the First Dynasty. A person's name was also regarded as one of the souls. Special care was therefore taken to preserve the name, which was equated with the preservation of the person.

The funerary incantations and magic formulas inscribed on the sarcophagi of the Middle Kingdom period later formed the basis of the *Book of the Dead*. The book is a motley collection of logically unconnected incantations, hymns, prayers, and glorifications of the gods. Most incantations were intended to protect the dead from the horrors of the next world and to ensure their posthumous bliss. The *Book of the Dead* contains, in particular, a description of judgement after death, with the weighing of the dead man's heart (the seat of reason, according to Egyptian concepts) and a list of his sins. That part of the *Book of the Dead* belongs to the New Kingdom period, when the view took root that only the righteous were assured posthumous bliss. During the New Kingdom this book was usually written on papyrus scrolls and placed in the dead man's tomb, to ensure acquittal in Osiris's court and bliss after death. The best passages of the *Book of the Dead* date to the Eighteenth Dynasty—a period of efflorescence in Egyptian literature.

Old Egyptian literature is known with any degree of certainty only from the times of the Middle Kingdom. Achthoes's instructions to his son, a monument of the profession of scribes, is a mockery of all the other occupations, imbued with the complacency of officialdom. Two more Instructions of the Middle Kingdom period have been preserved, compiled by royal fathers and containing admonitions to their

future successors on the art of running the state.

One of the best monuments of Egyptian literature is the "Tale of Sinuhe"—a work of considerable artistic merit with a lively and detailed narrative.

In brief, the story is this. A new king succeeds to the throne some time during the Middle Kingdom. Sinuhe, a courtier, who is at the time with an army camp, flees to Syria for fear of being implicated in court intrigues. After a long series of vicissitudes he reaches Syria, where he gradually attains riches and high status. In his old age, tormented by homesickness, he returns to Egypt where pharaoh Sinusert favourably receives him.

The "Story of Shipwrecked Sailor" is a narrative of voyages to remote lands. After a terrible storm destroys his ship, a certain Egyptian is stranded on a mysterious island where a huge serpent lives. That serpent generously supplies the guest with perfumes, ivory and other precious objects and sends him on his way back home. An Egyptian ship picks up the courageous sailor and brings him to the pharaoh's court. The story eloquently describes the fairy-tale landscape of the island and its wondrous fruits.

The cycle of tales about pharaoh Cheops and the magicians also dates to the Middle Kingdom, although they may have appeared as early as the Old Kingdom. In these tales, the crown princes, one after another, describe to Cheops the magic deeds of wizards that lived in the times of his predecessors.

The "Tale of the Eloquent Peasant" reflects the social relations of the Middle Kingdom. A villager sets out for the capital but is robbed on the way there by a highly placed official's servant. When the victim appeals to the official, the latter is not moved by his story but notices that the peasant is eloquent and makes him say long speeches which are recorded and sent to the pharaoh, a lover of rhetoric. In the end the pharaoh punishes the robber and rewards the victim.

Beginning with the Nineteenth Dynasty, a rich artistic tradition develops in spoken New Egyptian which became the literary norm of the 15th and 14th centuries B.C. One of these works, the "Tale of Truth and Falsehood", expresses indignation at the indifference of the powers that be towards the lot of the underprivileged. The "Life-weary Man's Dispute with His Soul" narrates the sufferings of a man disillusioned by the evil and soulless society and seeking death. The soul tries to talk him out of sui-

cide, advising him to enjoy life and not to hope for a life after death.

During the New Kingdom, several myths were invented (or given literary form). Particularly popular among these was the Osiris myth, according to which Osiris was killed by his evil brother Seth. Isis, the wife of Osiris, and his sister Nephthis revived the dead god. Later Isis gave birth to Osiris's son Horus, who vanquished Seth and took revenge upon him. Tried by the gods, Horus was acquitted and inherited his father's royal power and heavenly throne.

Later myths of creation sing the praises of the sun-god, who fashioned heaven, earth, plants, animals, and fishes out of the original aquatic chaos.

The "Myth of the Destruction of Mankind" is the story of people ceasing to obey the gods when the supreme god Ra became old. To punish the refractory humans Ra sent the divine Lioness Hathor-Sekhmet to the earth, who began to destroy them everywhere. Fearing a complete extermination of the human race, Ra ordered an inebriating beverage to be poured on earth. Hathor-Sekhmet took that beverage for human blood and on tasting it became drunk. Man was thus saved from complete disappearance from the face of the earth.

Narrative literature of later Egyptian epochs is known but poorly. One of the works of that time, a papyrus from the Pushkin Fine Arts Museum in Moscow, offers a detailed and lively account of the voyage of the Egyptian Wen-Amon to the Phoenician city of Byblos to get timber for a temple bark on instructions from a Theban priest. Quite possibly this narrative was founded on actual adventures. Among other interesting points it contains a picturesque description of a stormy sea.

Already in the early dynastic period, Egyptian art made a great contribution to human culture. It was at that period that the traditional pictorial forms were forged, which were later used in Egyptian art for many centuries.

In the pre-dynastic period, some artists achieved great mastery in the portrayal of men and animals. A fairly large number of round sculptures from the times of the Early Kingdom have been preserved. The sculptural monuments of the Third and Fourth Dynasties aimed at a faithful reproduction of the original. The artists portrayed the faces of pharaohs and their contemporaries with striking realism.

The pyramids of the Old Kingdom are magnifi-

cent architectural monuments. During the Middle Kingdom construction of stone edifices flourished again. South of Memphis, at the entrance to the Fayum oasis and in the desert around it, mudbrick limestone-faced pyramids of the kings were built. Beginning with pharaoh Tuthmosis I, Egyptian kings gave up the construction of pyramids. Tuthmosis ordered a tomb to be cut of rock in a gorge west of Thebes. Later, a royal cemetery was built here with cave tombs that were sometimes a hundred metres long. These tombs could not be seen from the outside, and their location was a great secret.

Art in the Middle Kingdom, and especially tomb painting, made great advances. For example, military exercises were skilfully and precisely painted during the Eleventh Dynasty in nomarchs' tombs near modern Beni-Hasan. Wooden sculptures of the Middle Kingdom are quite remarkable for their realistic portrayal of craftsmen.

The art of the New Kingdom is particularly rich in architectural monuments. Construction engineering of that time is known mostly from the ruins of Akhenaton's capital at modern el-Amarna which was abandoned by the pharaoh's successors and has survived to our times without much change.

The greatest monument of the New Kingdom was the Temple of Thebes, or the Karnak temple, which took centuries to build. Numerous courts and pylons adjoined the main edifice here. Before the pylons, immense royal sculptures and polished obelisks stood. A road lined with sphinxes led to the temple.

The sculptured portraits of Nefertiti, Akhenaton's wife, are masterpieces of Egyptian art. Many sculptures of exquisite finish have also been preserved since Saïte times.

Ancient Egyptian culture made a great impact on the neighbouring countries of the ancient Orient and later on antique culture, particularly of the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Greek and Roman historians, philosophers, scholars, artists, and sculptors displayed a lively interest in the history, culture, and science of Egypt. The present interest for the culture of ancient Egypt is also understandable. Archaeological studies now conducted in the Republic of Egypt continue to yield remarkable monuments of art, literature and architecture, enabling us to unravel the mysteries of that great civilisation of the East.

## Chapter 2

### *The Ancient States of Mesopotamia*

*Geographical Conditions. Population.* Mesopotamia is a flat country between the Tigris and the Euphrates in their lower and middle reaches. In the north and east Mesopotamia is bounded by the slopes of the Armenian and Iranian plateaus, in the west it adjoins the Syrian steppe and Arabian semi-desert, and in the south, the Persian Gulf. The Euphrates is 2,700 kilometres, and the Tigris, 1,900 kilometres long. Both rivers arise on the Armenian plateau, and in ancient times they emptied separately into the Persian Gulf. The Tigris is more turbulent than the Euphrates and carries twice as much water. Both these rivers have several tributaries each. The major tributaries of the Euphrates are the Balikh and the Khabur, and those of the Tigris are the Great and the Little Zab and the Diyala. In spring and summer these rivers regularly overflowed due to the thawing of snow in the mountainous areas. They carried silt containing organic elements and solutions of inorganic compounds from rock minerals, which fertilised the fields. The soil of Mesopotamia was fertile, but irrigation, melioration and drainage were needed all the year round to raise good crops. The earliest population inhabited both banks of the two rivers in the lower reaches, but mostly it lived along the Euphrates, whose waters were easier to use for irrigation.

In the north of Mesopotamia, the climate is sharply continental, and in the south, dry and hot. There was an abundance of clay and natural asphalt but neither building stone nor any metals in the valley of the two rivers. Willows grew on the river banks, and there was a great deal of reed in the marshlands of the south, but no forest at all. The

plants cultivated here were barley, spelt, millet, onions, garlic, cucumbers, beans, peas, and sesame. The rivers teemed with fish, which was an important element of the diet.

The centre of the development of the earliest civilisation lay in the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, in the southern part of the country known in antiquity as Babylonia. Babylonia's northern part was called Akkad, its south, Sumer. The northern part of Mesopotamia, an undulating steppe rising towards mountainous ridges, was Assyria. It was situated in the middle reaches of the Tigris, that is, on the territory of modern north-eastern Iraq.

The first settlements in southern Mesopotamia appeared in the 5th millennium B.C. The people who settled the lower reaches of the Tigris and Euphrates found there excellent hunting and fishing grounds. Gradually, however, the population began to cultivate land with the help of flint hoes and to breed livestock, although hunting and fishing continued to play an important role in their lives. It is at present difficult to determine the ethnic origin of these first settlers of the lower Tigris and Euphrates.

The first Sumerian settlements emerged in the extreme south of Mesopotamia not later than the beginning of the 4th millennium B.C., although the precise date of those first settlements is difficult to ascertain. Judging by ancient pictures, the Sumerians' characteristic traits were a round face and a large straight nose. It appears that the Sumerians were not the first inhabitants of southern Mesopotamia, as many toponymic elements occurring there after the settlement of the lower Tigris and Euphrates by that people cannot be explained in terms

of Sumerian. The Sumerians apparently found tribes in southern Mesopotamia which spoke a language different from both Sumerian and Akkadian, and borrowed from them the most ancient names of the country's various areas. Gradually the Sumerians occupied the whole of Mesopotamia, from the present-day site of Bagdad in the north down to the Persian Gulf in the south. Where the Sumerians originally came from is so far uncertain. Contradictory views have been expressed by various scholars, Iran, Asia Minor and Central Asia being named as possible homelands of the Sumerians. According to an ancient tradition of the Sumerians themselves, they arrived in Mesopotamia from the islands of the Persian Gulf.

The Sumerians spoke a language whose affinity to any of the known languages has not yet been established. Many scholars have endeavoured to prove kinship between Sumerian and Turkic, Caucasian, Etruscan and other languages, but so far no definitive results have been achieved.

Beginning with the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C., the northern part of Mesopotamia was inhabited by the Semites. These were the cattle-breeding tribes of the ancient Levant and of the Syrian steppe. The language of Semitic tribes which settled Mesopotamia was called Akkadian. In southern Mesopotamia, the Semites spoke the Babylonian, and in the north, in the middle Tigris valley, the Assyrian dialect of the Akkadian language.

For several centuries the Semites coexisted with the Sumerians, but later they began to move south and by the end of the 3rd millennium B.C. occupied the whole of southern Mesopotamia. As a result, the Akkadian language gradually ousted out Sumerian. The latter, however, remained the official state language as late as the 21st century B.C., although it was more and more replaced by Akkadian in everyday life. By the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C. Sumerian was already a dead language. It was able to survive only in the out-of-the-way areas of the lower Tigris and Euphrates, but later it was supplanted by Akkadian here as well. However, Sumerian continued to exist as the language of the religious cult and, to some extent, of science, and to be studied at schools, until the 1st century A.D.

However, the disappearance of the Sumerian language did not at all signify a physical extermination of the people who spoke it. The Sumerians mixed

with the Semites, retaining their religion and culture, which the Akkadians borrowed from them with some modifications.

Late in the 3rd millennium B.C., stock-breeding tribes of Semitic origin began to penetrate into Mesopotamia from the Syrian steppe. Akkadians called these West-Semitic tribes the Amorites. In Akkadian, *Amurru* meant "West", chiefly with reference to Syria; the nomads of this region included numerous tribes which spoke different though cognate dialects. Some of these tribes were called the Suteans.

Beginning with the 3rd millennium B.C., northern Mesopotamia, from the upper Diyala to Lake Urmia, now the territory of Iranian Azerbaijan and Kurdistan, was inhabited by the Quti or Guti tribes. Their occupations were land cultivation and semi-nomadic stock-breeding. The Gutians' ethnic origin is still a mystery; it is certain, though, that they spoke a language quite different from the Sumerian or from any Semitic or Indo-European languages. The language of the Gutian tribes may have been cognate with Hurrian. At the end of the 23rd century the Gutians, who were then still at the primitive communal stage of development, invaded Mesopotamia. For a whole century they held sway there, imposing a heavy tribute on the population, but at the end of the 22nd century the Gutians' power in Mesopotamia was overthrown, and they were pushed back to the upper Diyala, where they still lived as late as the 1st millennium B.C.

Since ancient times, northern Mesopotamia was inhabited by Hurrian tribes. Apparently they were the autochthonous population of northern Mesopotamia, northern Syria and the Armenian plateau. In northern Mesopotamia, the Hurrians founded the Mitanni state, which was one of the major powers of the Near East in the mid-2nd millennium B.C. The Hurrians formed the bulk of the Mitanni population, although there were also some Indo-European or, to be more precise, Indo-Aryan newcomers there. In Syria, the Hurrians were apparently in the minority. In language and origin the Hurrians were closely related to Urartean tribes inhabiting the Armenian plateau. In the 3rd and 2nd millennia, the Hurrian-Urartean ethnic stratum occupied the entire territory from the hilly plains of northern Mesopotamia to central Transcaucasia. There is evidence that in the 3rd and 2nd millennia B.C. the

Sumerians and the Akkadians called the Hurrian country and the Hurrian tribes Subartu (hence the modern ethnic name Subareans). The Hurrians still lived in some parts of the Armenian plateau in the 6th and 5th centuries B. C. In the 2nd millennium B. C., the Hurrians borrowed the Akkadian cuneiform script, in which they wrote both in Hurrian and in Akkadian.

In the second half of the 2nd millennium B. C., considerable migrations of Semitic stock-breeding tribes occurred in the Near East. A great wave of Aramaean tribes moved into the Syrian steppe, northern Syria and northern Mesopotamia from northern Arabia. These tribes are first mentioned in the middle of the 2nd millennium B. C. At first, the Akkadians called them Ahlamu and later Aramu. In the late 13th century B. C. the Aramaeans founded a great number of small principalities in western Syria and south-western Mesopotamia. By the beginning of the 1st millennium B. C., the Aramaeans assimilated almost completely the Hurrian and Amorite population of Syria and northern Mesopotamia.

In the 8th century B. C., all Aramaean states were seized by Assyria, but the influence of the Aramaic language only increased after that. By the 7th century B. C. all Syria spoke Aramaic, and it began to spread through Mesopotamia as well – a process facilitated by the fact that the Aramaeans were extremely numerous, and their script was convenient and easily learnt.

In the 8th and 7th centuries B. C. the Assyrian administration adopted the policy of moving about the subjugated peoples from one end of the Assyrian empire to another. The purpose of these deportations was to impede understanding between different peoples and thus to prevent their rebelling against the Assyrian yoke. Besides, Assyrian kings endeavoured to settle territories devastated by endless wars. As a result of the mixing of peoples and languages inevitable in such cases, the Aramaic language everywhere emerged victorious, becoming the dominant vernacular from Syria to the western regions of Iran. Even in Assyria itself Aramaic came to be spoken in everyday intercourse. After the downfall of the Assyrian empire in the late 7th century B. C., the Assyrians completely gave up their own language and switched to Aramaic.

Beginning with the 9th century B. C., southern

Babylonia was invaded by the Chaldaeans related to the Aramaeans; gradually, Chaldaeans occupied the whole country.

After the conquest of Mesopotamia by the Persians in 539 B. C., Aramaic became the official language of state administration in that country, while Akkadian lived on only in the major cities, but even here it was gradually superseded by the Aramaic and by the late 1st century A. D. completely forgotten. The Babylonians themselves ultimately merged with the Chaldaeans and Aramaeans.

*Sources.* Of great significance for the emergence of Assyriology – the science studying the languages, history and culture of the ancient Near East – was the deciphering of Old Persian cuneiform writing by the German scholar Georg Grotefend in 1802. After that, the Akkadian cuneiform writing was also deciphered with the aid of trilingual inscriptions from Iran. 1857 is regarded as the year when Assyriology was born.

Archaeological studies of Mesopotamia began in the first half of the 19th century. At first, however, the excavations were limited to the search for sensational finds, such as reliefs and precious objects. In 1843, the French diplomat Paul Émile Botta discovered the ruins of the city of Dur-Sharrukin (now the site Khorsabad), the residence of the Assyrian king Sargon II. These excavations formed the beginning of the Assyrian collection of the Louvre. In 1845-1847 the British diplomat Henry Layard excavated the Nimrud mound, under which the ruins of the Assyrian city of Kalhu were discovered. In 1853, Hormuzd Rassam, a British subject, found the ruins of Assurbanipal's palace and library in Nineveh (modern mound Kuyunjik). These finds formed the basis of the cuneiform collections of the British Museum.

Since 1890, the expedition of the University of Pennsylvania had been digging at the site of the city of Nippur, with some interruptions. Remains of the temple of the god Enlil with a ziggurat have been discovered, as well as ruins of a ruler's palace and many Sumerian literary texts. Between 1899 and 1917, a German expedition under Robert Koldewey dug at the site of Babylon. This was the most costly excavation in the history of archaeology. The city's walls, Nebuchadnezzar II's palace, city blocks and a

great many other things were found. In 1919, the British scholar Leonard Woolley began to dig at the site of the city of Ur, discovering there the remains of a ziggurat, temples, and a royal necropolis with 1,800 burials and valuable grave goods from the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C. Since 1933, French archaeologists under André Parrot had been digging at the Mari site (modern Tell Hariri) in Syria. The magnificent palace of the king of Mari has been excavated, as well as an archive with about 20,000 cuneiform tablets—business texts and diplomatic correspondence between Mari rulers and Syrian and Mesopotamian kings.

Although archaeological excavations on Iraqi territory have been going on for more than a hundred years, they continue to yield fresh boons to archaeological science—works of art, literature, and documents from everyday life. For the early periods of the history of Mesopotamia, when writing did not yet exist (the first written texts appeared at the beginning of the 3rd millennium), of great significance are tools, remnants of dwellings, grave goods, and handicraft products.

As a result of many years of excavation in Iraq, interesting materials on the earliest stages of the Mesopotamian civilisation have been obtained by Soviet archaeologists.

Mesopotamia's ancient history is documented in numerous written sources, including hundreds of thousands of business, administrative, and legal documents, historical chronicles, laws, literary works, grammatical, medical, astronomical, mathematical and religious texts.

The most ancient business records, about a thousand clay tablets all told, have been found at Uruk and Jémdet Nasr. These documents are inventories of foodstuffs and tools written in a very early type of script, the pictographic one. Later, beginning with the middle of the 3rd millennium B.C., large archives of diverse cuneiform texts appear. Of these, legal monuments should especially be mentioned, as they enable us to study ancient legal norms and procedures. No other country of the ancient world left such a wealth of legal codes as did Mesopotamia. The oldest of these are the Laws of Shulgi, dated to the late 3rd millennium. Laws from Eshnunna, a peripheral kingdom in the valley of the Diyala, are dated to the 20th century. The most comprehensive collection of laws is the Code of Hammurapi (18th

century B.C.). The law book from Assur, the capital of the Assyrian state, containing the text of the so-called Middle Assyrian laws, is dated to the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C.

Of great importance for the study of political and military history are inscriptions left by the rulers of Sumer, Babylonia and Assyria.

At about 290 B.C., a Babylonian named Berossos, a priest of the Esagila temple, compiled a three-volume work on the history and culture of Babylonia. His sources were astronomical tables, ancient Babylonian mythology and historical documents. Regrettably, that valuable work, written in Greek and based on reliable sources, has only been preserved in extracts from the works of later antique authors.

*Sumer.* At the end of the 4th millennium and beginning of the 3rd, almost simultaneously with the emergence of the state in Egypt, the first states appeared in the southern part of the Tigris-Euphrates valley, one of the most important fountains of world civilisation.

At that time, the ancient population of southern Mesopotamia began to drain the marshlands and to use the water of the Euphrates, and later of the more turbulent Tigris, for land irrigation. The alluvial soil was soft and loose, so that canals and dams could be built with the most primitive tools. Gradually the irrigation system was extended to cover entire provinces. The network of waterways that was the basis of irrigation later changed but little compared with the beginning of the 3rd millennium, and abundant stable harvests were gathered already in remote antiquity. Texts from the first half of the 3rd millennium point to the existence of an efficient administration and to the functioning of a well-kept and effective system of irrigation and an extensive network of canals. Relatively high labour productivity permitted the use of slave labour as early as the beginning of the 3rd millennium. The Sumerian words for male and female slave, which literally meant "man or woman of the mountains", show that originally slaves were foreigners, i. e., prisoners of war.

At the beginning of the 3rd millennium, the southern part of Mesopotamia was not yet united—several small city-states existed here. These cities,



built on natural hills, were surrounded by walls. They had a population of 40 to 50 thousand each.

Situated in the extreme south-west of Mesopotamia was the city of Eridu which, according to Sumerian legend, developed a high culture. Close to Eridu lay the city of Ur, which played a great role in the history of Sumer. North of Ur, the city of Larsa stood on the bank of the Euphrates, and east of Larsa, on the bank of the Tigris, the city of Lagash was situated. Uruk, lying on the Euphrates, played a prominent role in the unification of the country. Nippur, the principal shrine of the whole Sumer, stood approximately in the centre of Mesopotamia.

The work of Berossos shows that Babylonian priests divided the history of their country into two periods, "before the flood" and "after the flood". Berossos lists ten kings that are said to have ruled 432,000 years before the flood. Just as fantastic is the figure for the reigns before the flood contained in cuneiform lists compiled early in the 2nd millennium B. C. at Isin and Larsa. That Sumerian list of kings, covering the period from the beginning of Mesopotamian history to the end of the First Dynasty of Isin (1794 B. C.) is based on the assumption that Babylonia, the areas of Diyala and the middle Euphrates (i. e., the Mari state) always constituted a single state, and that the dynasties listed there ruled consecutively rather than simultaneously, as was often the case in reality. Also fantastic is the number of years for the reigns after the flood indicated in the work of Berossos and the list mentioned above. Beginning with the first centuries of the 3rd millennium, however, the history of Sumer can be rather reliably reconstructed from various cuneiform sources.

In the first half of the 3rd millennium B. C., several political centres arose in Sumer, whose rulers bore the title of *lugal* or *ensi*. An *ensi* was an independent ruler of a city together with the area immediately adjoining it. The title indicates that originally the representative of state power was also the supreme priest, as it was actually a priestly title. *Lugal*, which literally means "great man" commonly denoted a king.

In the middle of the 3rd millennium B. C. the city of Kish claimed a predominant position in Sumer, its rulers assuming the title of "king of the whole world". Somewhat later, the city of Lagash pushed into the foreground. As the lands of the plains began

to be cultivated, the boundaries of the small Sumerian states came into contact, which resulted in continual conflicts between the states in the first half of the 3rd millennium. In the middle of the 25th century B. C., Lagash under *ensi* Eannatum routed in a fierce battle its constant enemy, the city of Umma situated north of Lagash. After Eannatum's death, however, the war with Umma flared up again. Entemena, ruler of Lagash (c. 2360-2340 B. C.), victoriously ended that war.

But the internal situation in Lagash was not stable, as the economic and political position of the popular masses of that city deteriorated. To restore their rights, they united under Uruinimgina, an influential citizen. The latter removed an *ensi* named Lugalanda, taking his place (c. 2318-2312). In the second year of his rule Uruinimgina declared himself king (*lugal*). During his six years in power he implemented important social reforms that were the oldest legal acts in the socioeconomic sphere known to date. He was the first to proclaim a slogan that later became popular throughout Mesopotamia, "Let not the strong offend widows and orphans!" High taxes previously imposed on high-ranking priests were abolished, and payment in kind to dependent temple workers was increased. The independence of temple economy from the royal administration was restored. Certain concessions were also made to the rank-and-file free population: payments for the performance of religious rites were reduced, as was conscript labour at irrigation construction and maintenance, and certain taxes required of craftsmen were cancelled. Besides, Uruinimgina restored the courts in rural communities and guaranteed the rights of Lagash citizens protecting them against their enslavement by usurers. Finally, polyandry was abolished. Uruinimgina claimed that all these reforms were a contract concluded with Ningirsu, the supreme god of Lagash, and that he was merely carrying out the god's will.

While Uruinimgina was implementing his reforms, a new war with Umma broke out. Umma's ruler Lugalzaggesi made a treaty with the city of Uruk, recruiting its help in the struggle against Lagash. In the seventh year of Uruinimgina's rule the war ended in a defeat for Lagash. The city was seized by enemy troops, the temple was plundered, and the reforms abolished.

Umma under Lugalzaggesi was the last major

Sumerian city before the subjugation of the south of Mesopotamia by the Akkadian king Sargon. Lugalzagesi also seized power in Uruk, adopting thereupon the title of "king of Uruk, king of the Sumer country". He also succeeded in conquering the cities of Adab and Eridu and extending his rule through nearly all Sumer, of which Uruk became the capital. Lugalzagesi declared: "From the Lower Sea (the Persian Gulf) along the Euphrates and Tigris to the Upper Sea (the Mediterranean) the god Enlil handed over all the lands to me." Lugalzagesi's rule did not, of course, extend to the Mediterranean, but direct trading with that area apparently existed in his reign.

Sumer's main branch of the economy was agriculture based on a well-developed irrigation system. There is a Sumerian literary monument called the "farmers' almanac" which dates from the 3rd millennium B. C. In it, an experienced farmer instructs his son on ways of maintaining soil fertility and preventing soil salinisation. Among other things, he insists that only one crop a year should be gathered in order not to exhaust the land. The text also describes all the field works in their proper sequence. Stockbreeding was also of great importance for the country's economy.

At that time, the crafts were already fairly well developed. House builders were especially numerous among urban craftsmen. Excavations of tombs at Ur belonging to the middle of the 3rd millennium indicate a high level of Sumerian metallurgy. Helmets, axes, daggers and spears made of gold, silver and copper were found in the tombs. The craftsmen knew chasing and engraving. As there were no metal ores in southern Mesopotamia, the presence of metal artifacts in the tombs of Ur indicates extensive international trading. Gold was brought from the western areas of India, lapis lazuli from the territory of modern Badakhshan in Afghanistan, stone for making vessels from Iran, and silver from Asia Minor. The Sumerians bartered these goods for their principal commodities—wool, grain, and dates.

The craftsmen's local resources were very few—clay, reed, wool, leather and flax. Ea, god of wisdom, was regarded as the patron of potters, builders, weavers, blacksmiths, and other craftsmen. The technique of baking brick in kilns was known already at that early period. Buildings were sometimes faced with glazed brick. In the middle of the

3rd millennium B. C. the potter's wheel came into use. The most expensive vessels were covered with enamel and glaze.

Reed growing in profusion along the banks of canals and rivers was a regular substitute for wood. It was used for making mats, baskets and boxes. For strength, these were sometimes covered with leather and tarred. The most ancient boats were also made of reed. They were given a coating of asphalt, to make them watertight. Ships, equipped with sails or oars, were also made of wood.

Bronze tools were made already in the early 3rd millennium B. C., and they remained the principal metal implements until the beginning of the Iron Age in Mesopotamia in the late 2nd millennium B. C. A small quantity of tin was added to molten copper to obtain bronze.

*Mesopotamia under the Dominion of Akkad and Ur.* The Semitic Akkadian population gradually assumed greater sway in Mesopotamia. As early as the 27th century, the northern part was inhabited by the Akkadians, while the Sumerians remained the principal population in the south. The most ancient city founded by the Semites in Mesopotamia was Akkad, which later became the capital of a state of the same name. That city was apparently situated on the left bank of the Euphrates, where it comes closest to the Tigris. Even after the Akkadian state ceased to exist, its territory continued to be called Akkad, while the southern part of Mesopotamia retained the name of Sumer. It should be noted that there was no racial or linguistic enmity between Sumerians and Akkadians—they were rather opposed to one another in their mode of life, the Sumerians leading a settled life and the Semites being nomads. Already in the middle of the 3rd millennium, the Akkadians were the inheritors of the Sumerian culture, which they continued to develop. By the mid-24th century, the Sumerian population which lived in the northern part of the country was assimilated by the Semites.

C. 2340, Sargon became king of Akkad. He was a founder of a dynasty in the true sense of the word: five kings, beginning with himself, ruled for 150 years, son after father. The name of Sargon must have been assumed on accession to the throne, as it means "the king is legitimate" (Sharrumkin, in Akkadian). The king's personality was shrouded in

numerous legends even during his life-time. He said of himself: "My mother was poor, and I did not know who my father was... My mother conceived me, and gave birth in secrecy, then put me in a reed basket and sent me floating down the river." According to one of the legends, Sargon was a gardener and cupbearer of the king of Kish, and later founded the city of Akkad, becoming its king.

Lugalzagesi, ruler of Umma, who had established his power over most of the Sumerian cities, began a long struggle against Sargon. After several failures, Sargon won a decisive victory over Lugalzagesi and fifty vassal rulers. After that Sargon fought successful campaigns in Syria and the Taurus Mountains, and defeated the king of Elam.

Sargon established the first regular army known to history, consisting of 5,400 warriors who, in his words, daily ate at his table. It was a loyal and well-trained professional army whose entire well-being depended on the king.

Under Sargon, new canals were built and irrigation was regulated throughout the country. A unified system of weights and measures was introduced. Akkad traded with India and East Arabia by sea, importing timber, stone and metals from those lands.

At the end of Sargon's rule, famine caused a revolt in the country, which was suppressed after his death by his younger son Rimush c. 2260. Later Rimush fell a victim of a coup, and the throne went to his brother Manishtusu. After fifteen years of reign, Manishtusu was killed during another revolt, and Naram-Sin (2236-2200), son of Manishtusu and grandson of Sargon, acceded to the throne.

During Naram-Sin's long rule, Akkad reached the peak of its might, subjugating numerous opponents. At the very beginning of Naram-Sin's reign, the ancient cities of southern Mesopotamia led by Kish, resenting Akkad's rise, revolted. That rebellion was only crushed after many years of struggle. Having consolidated his power over Mesopotamia, Naram-Sin assumed the title of "the powerful god of Akkad" and ordered reliefs to be made in which he wore horned headgear, the horns being a symbol of divinity. The population had to worship Naram-Sin as a living god, although no king before him had claimed such honours, and later, too, only a few rulers imitated Naram-Sin in this respect.

Naram-Sin regarded himself as the ruler of the

whole world that was then known and bore the title of "king of the four quarters of the world". He waged many wars, seizing new lands, winning victories over the kings of Elam and the Lullubi tribes living on the territory of modern north-western Iran, conquering the state of Mari in the middle Euphrates, and extending his sovereignty to Syria. At Susa, capital of Elam, he built edifices of brick stamped with his name, and gave war booty to the temples of that city. The Akkadian influence at Susa was so strong at that time that even legal documents, letters and literary works were written in the Akkadian and not Elamite language.

Under Naram-Sin's successor Shar-kali-sharri (2200-2176 B. C.), whose name means "king of all kings", the disintegration of the Akkadian empire began. The new king had to wage a long struggle against the Semitic tribes of Amorites advancing from the west, and simultaneously against the invasion of the Gutians from the north-east. At the same time there were revolts against central power in Mesopotamia itself.

The popular unrest was caused by acute social conflicts. The royal domain grew enormously; subordinating the temple estates, the king began mass exploitation of citizens with little or no land. Enslavement of free members of society unable to pay their debts significantly reduced the numbers of such free men who could be called up to the army to fight off the external enemy. C. 2170 Mesopotamia was conquered and plundered by the Gutian tribes of the Zagros Mountains. That was a bad period in the history of Mesopotamia, which lasted some 60 years and put an end to the Akkadian dynasty.

C. 2109, the armed people of Uruk under their king Utu-hegal inflicted a severe defeat on the Gutian tribes and drove them away from the land. In Utu-hegal's words, the god Enlil chose him to expunge the very name of "Gutium, the creeping serpent of the mountains, the enemy of the gods, who stole the kingdom of Sumer and filled Sumer with fear". After his victory over the Gutian tribes, Utu-hegal claimed sovereignty over all Sumer, but the dominion over southern Mesopotamia soon passed to Ur which was ruled by the Third Dynasty of Ur (2112-2003). That dynasty was founded by Ur-Nammu, who bore the title of "King of Sumer and Akkad", as did his successors.

Under Ur-Nammu, royal power assumed despotic

character. The king was the supreme judge, the head of the entire administration, and he also decided on issues of war and peace. On state and temple estates, numerous scribes and officials recorded all the aspects of management even to the minutest details. An organised system of transportation functioned in the country, so that documents could be sent by messenger to all parts of the state.

Ur-Nammu's son Shulgi (2093-2046) established his rule over Syria and Elam. He also had himself deified. His statues were set up in temples, and sacrifices had to be made before them.

The text of Shulgi's laws points to the existence of a highly developed legal system. Shulgi's laws are the oldest known to date. They establish, in particular, rewards for taking a runaway slave back to his owner. Punishments are also envisaged for various kinds of mutilation; unlike the later Hammurapi laws, the Shulgi laws were not guided by the "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" principle: instead, rules for financial compensation were instituted. Shulgi's laws also envisaged punishments for the wife's infidelity, and for a woman slave's attempts "to be on an equal footing" with the mistress of the house.

Under Shulgi's successors, the Amorites, who attacked Mesopotamia from Syria, became a grave danger to the state. To stop their advance, the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur built a long line of fortifications. But the internal situation was unstable, too. The vast temple estates demanded great numbers of workers, who gradually lost their rights as free members of society and could no longer be recruited into the army. For example, the temple of the goddess Baba at Lagash alone had land property of more than 4,500 hectares.

The army of Ur began to suffer defeats in the wars with the Amorites and the Elamites. In 2003, the Third Dynasty of Ur was overthrown, and the last king of that dynasty Ib-bi-Sin was taken prisoner and brought to Elam. Ur's temples were plundered, and an Elamite garrison was left there. After 1997, power at Ur was seized by Ishbi-Irra, ruler of Isin, in the central part of Babylonia. Of the kings of that dynasty, the most famous is Lipit-Ishtar (1934-1924), who promulgated a code of laws. In the prologue to those laws he declared that he had freed the people of Sumer and Akkad enslaved for their debts and established just order.

*Babylonia in the 2nd Millennium B.C.* The time from the end of the Third Dynasty of Ur to 1595, when Babylonia lost its independence, is called the Old Babylonian period. After the Third Dynasty of Ur, many local dynasties of Amorite origin arose throughout the country. Because of the overpopulation of the territory west of Mesopotamia, the Amorites searched for new grazing lands for their cattle and settled in Babylonia; by the middle of the 2nd millennium B.C. they had gradually merged with the local Sumerian and Akkadian population.

In Akkad, the Amorites formed a state with the capital Isin, and in the south of the country, another kingdom, whose capital was Larsa. Besides, there was the city-state Mari in the middle Euphrates – an important centre of Akkadian settlement already in the first half of the 3rd millennium B.C. In north-eastern Mesopotamia, in the valley of the Diyala, there existed the state of Eshnunna, where a code of laws was compiled in Akkadian in the early 20th century.

C. 1894 B.C., the Amorites seized the northern part of the Isin kingdom, founding an independent state with its capital at Babylon on the Euphrates, in the north of the country. Beginning with that time the role of Babylon, the youngest of the cities of Mesopotamia, steadily grew from century to century.

At the beginning, the Babylonian kingdom did not play a very important role. The first king to vigorously extend the borders of that state was Hammurapi (1792-1750). In 1785, relying on the support of Rim-Sin, a ruler of the Elamite dynasty at Larsa, Hammurapi conquered Uruk and Isin. He later helped to drive away from Mari the Assyrian king Shamshi-Adad I's son who ruled there, and to enthrone Zimri-Lim, offspring of an old local dynasty. In 1763 Hammurapi seized Eshnunna, and in the following year defeated Rim-Sin, a powerful king and his former ally, seizing his capital Larsa. Thereupon Hammurapi decided to establish his rule over Mari, too, which had before that been friendly towards him. In 1760 he attained that goal, and two years later he destroyed the palace of Zimri-Lim who tried to restore his independence. Hammurapi then conquered the area along the middle Tigris, including the city of Assur.

At the end of his reign Hammurapi was engaged in building fortifications along the northern and

north-eastern borders of Babylonia. After his death, his son Samsu-iluna (1749-1712) became king. He had to repulse the attacks of the warlike Kassite tribes inhabiting the mountainous regions north of Elam. C. 1742, the Kassites under their king Gandaš invaded Babylonia but only succeeded in capturing the foothills north-east of it. In the following year, however, Samsu-iluna had to fight against the coalition of Elam and the cities of Eshnunna, Isin and Uruk. At the end of his reign, Samsu-iluna encountered a new enemy, a coalition of chieftains of Babylonia's coastal strip along the Persian Gulf, who attempted to conquer the north of the country.

Under Ammisaduqa (1646-1626), one of Samsu-iluna's successors, an important social reform was implemented—the financial debts of private individuals, debts in kind, and arrears of state taxes were cancelled, and persons enslaved for their debts were freed.

From the end of the 18th century, Babylonia was threatened by the Hurrian, Hittite and Kassite tribes. To defend the country from the Kassites advancing from the mountains east of Mesopotamia, a fortress was built in the north-east of Babylonia. But Babylonia was plagued by an inner crisis; it no longer played an important role in the political history of the Near East, and was unable to withstand foreign invasions for long. The year 1594 marked the end of the First Babylonian Dynasty, of which Hammurapi was the most famous representative. Babylon was seized by the Hittite king Mursilis. When the Hittites went back home with a rich booty, the kings of the coastal areas captured Babylon. After that the country was conquered by the Kassites (c. 1518), whose rule lasted until 1157 B.C. The whole of that period is commonly called Kassite, or Middle Babylonian. Kassite kings, however, were rather rapidly assimilated by the local population, and their rule was no longer seen as a foreign yoke.

*Babylonian Economy and Society in the 2nd Millennium B.C.* After the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur, the gigantic system of the king's centralised estate was destroyed, and in its place emerged small holdings of private individuals. In the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C., new and better bronze agricultural implements were invented. The irrigation network was expanded and improved. Further advances in

the handicrafts were observed; the texts of that period mention builders, blacksmiths, carpenters, ship-builders, etc. Under the Kassite kings, horses and mules came into regular use, and a combined plough-and-sower was introduced.

The laws of the state of Eshnunna listed tariffs of prices and payments for labour, and included articles on marriage, family, and criminal law. Capital punishment was envisaged for the wife's infidelity, the rape of a married woman and the kidnapping of a free man's child. It appears from these laws that slaves were branded and could not cross the city boundary without the master's permission.

The laws of king Lipit-Ishtar date from a somewhat later period. These regulate, among other things, the slaves' status. Penalties were fixed for a slave's attempted escape and for the concealment of runaway slaves. According to those laws, if a woman slave married a free man, she and her children in this marriage became free.

The most outstanding monument of ancient Oriental legal thinking are the laws of Hammurapi. They are inscribed on a large stele of basalt. Besides, many copies of parts of that code have been preserved on clay tablets, as they were studied at schools until the 1st century A.D. The obverse side of the stele shows, above the articles of the laws, the king facing Shamash, the sun-god and the patron of justice. The text of the code follows, covering both sides of the stele.

The code begins with a lengthy preamble stating that the gods handed royal power to Hammurapi for him to protect the weak, the orphans and the widows from oppression by the strong. The preamble is followed by 282 articles of the laws covering virtually all aspects of contemporary Babylonian society (civil, criminal, and administrative law, and the imposition of fines). The code ends in a comprehensive conclusion.

Although the code does not follow any strictly systematic approach, and neither does it envisage all the possible juristic situations, the laws of Hammurapi, both in their content and the level of the development of legal thought, are a great step forward compared to the Sumerian and Akkadian legal monuments that preceded them. The laws of Hammurapi were only improved upon in the 6th century A.D., when Roman law was codified under emperor Justinian. In defining penalties, the Hammurapi

Code adopted, though not always consistently, the principle of guilt and evil intent. For instance, different penalties were imposed for manslaughter and murder. But mutilations were punished on the ancient principle of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth".

The penalties envisaged in some of the articles were clearly motivated by the class approach. In particular, severe penalties were envisaged for recalcitrant slaves who refused to obey their masters. Stealing or concealing someone else's slave was punishable by death.

Old Babylonian society consisted of full-fledged citizens called "the husband's sons", *mushkenums* or legally free men deprived of certain rights, and slaves. Mutilation of a "husband's son" was punished on the talion principle, while the same mutilation of a *mushkenum* entailed a fine only. A physician guilty of faulty practice in operating on a "husband's son" was punished by having his hand cut off, while the same faulty operation on a slave would cost him only the price of the slave, payable to the master. If a house collapsed through the builder's fault and the son of the master of that house died under the ruins, the builder was punished by the death of his own son. If anyone stole the property of a *mushkenum*, the thief had to pay tenfold damages, while the stealing of the king's or a temple's property was punished by a thirtyfold fine.

To prevent the numbers of warriors and taxpayers decreasing, Hammurapi tried to ease the economic burden of the more oppressed sections of the free population. In particular, one of the articles of the laws limits the enslavement of an insolvent debtor to three years of working for the creditor, whereupon the loan, regardless of its amount, was considered to be paid off. If a debtor's crops were destroyed by a natural disaster, the deadline for paying back the loan and the interest was automatically put off by a year.

Some of the code's articles referred to lease law. The payment for leasing a field usually equalled a third of the crop, and of a garden, two-thirds.

For a marriage to be legal, a written contract had to be concluded. The penalty for adultery on the wife's part was death by drowning. If, however, the husband wanted to forgive the adulterous wife, both she and her seducer went unpunished. Adultery on the part of the husband was not viewed as a crime

unless he seduced the wife of a free man. The father could not disinherit his son if the latter committed no crime, and he also had to teach the son his craft.

Warriors received grants of land from the king and had to go to war at the king's bidding. The plots were handed down from father to son and were inalienable. A creditor could impound only that property which a warrior in debt had acquired himself, but not the royal gift of the land.

Severe penalties were envisaged for robbers. If the robber was not found, the whole community on whose territory the crime was committed was responsible for paying back damages to the victim.

*Assyria in the 3rd and 2nd Millennia.* The city of Assur was founded on the right bank of the Tigris in northern Mesopotamia as early as the first half of the 3rd millennium. This city gave its name to the whole of the country lying on the middle Tigris. By mid-3rd millennium, a trading station was founded at Assur by Sumerians and Akkadians. Sumerian influence on Assur's culture is proved, in particular, by sculpture, pottery, household utensils and architecture. Later, in the 24th-22nd centuries, Assur became a major administrative centre of the Akkadian empire founded by Sargon. During the Third Dynasty of Ur (22nd-21st centuries) Assur was ruled by governors of Sumerian kings.

Unlike Babylonia, Assyria was a poor country, and the Tigris's narrow valley could not support all of its population. The rise of Assur was due to its geographic position. Important caravan routes passed through that city or its neighbourhood, routes along which precious metals (silver, copper, lead) and timber were brought to Babylonia from northern Syria, Asia Minor and Armenia, as well as gold from Egypt, and Babylonian agricultural and craftsmen's products were carried in exchange for these goods. For this reason Assur became a major trading centre. Besides, Assyrians founded many trading stations outside their country.

The most important of these trading stations or colonies was in the city of Kanesh in Asia Minor (modern Kültepe not far from the town of Kayseri in Turkey). An extensive archive of this colony has been preserved, presumably dating to the 20th and 19th centuries. Assyrian merchants' donkey caravans brought to Kanesh handicraft products, espe-



cially dyed woollen fabrics mass-produced in their homeland, and exported lead and silver (used at the time as value standards in Assyria), copper, wool and leather. Besides, Assyrian merchants sold local wares to other countries.

Relations between the colonists and Kanesh citizens were regulated by local laws, while the colony's internal life was controlled by Assur, which benefited from the considerable duty brought by commerce.

Assur's supreme organ of power was the council of elders, and events were dated by the names of that council's members, a new member being chosen for that purpose each year. There was also the hereditary office of ruler (*ishshakkum*), who had the right to convene the council but could make no important decisions without its approval.

To keep a hold on the existing caravan routes and seize new ones, Assyria had to be a strong military power. The *ishshakkum*'s influence therefore gradually grew. Late in the 19th and early in the 18th century Shamshi-Adad I, son of an Amorite chieftain who had invaded Mesopotamia after the fall of the Third Dynasty of Ur, fought to establish his personal power. He no longer called himself simply an *ishshakkum*, as Assyria's rulers had done before him, but also "the king of multitudes". By and by he spread his rule over the whole of northern Mesopotamia. He even installed his younger son as viceroy in Mari. But in c. 1756 B. C. Assyria was conquered by the Babylonian king Hammurapi. At about the same time Assyria began to lose its caravan trading monopoly.

In the middle of the 2nd millennium, Assyria had to recognise the sovereignty of the Mitanni kings in northern Mesopotamia. C. 1500 Mitanni achieved the peak of its power, seizing the provinces of northern Syria, but soon it began to decline. First, Egyptians drove the Mitannians from Syria, and c. 1360 the Hittite king Suppiluliumas utterly defeated them. The Assyrian king Ashur-uballit used the opportunity to seize part of Mitanni territory. Later, Adad-nirari I (1307-1275) waged war on Babylonia and completely subjugated Mitanni. After that he wanted to conclude a treaty with the Hittite king Hattusili III, saying that he could be the latter's brother. But Hattusili's reply was insulting: "What's this talk of brotherhood... You and me, we were not born of one mother."

In the second half of the 13th century, under king Tukulti-Ninurta I (1244-1208), Assyria became the most powerful state of the Middle East. Seizing Babylonia, the Assyrian king appointed his governors there and had the statue of Marduk, the supreme god of the Babylonians, brought from the Esagila temple in Babylon to Assur, which signified complete loss of independence by that country.

But endless wars exhausted Assyria and resulted in internal unrest. It is reported in one text that in the middle of the 11th century the king's son and Assur noblemen rebelled, driving the ruler from the throne and putting him to the sword.

Assyria's difficult position was aggravated by the fact that Aramaean tribes, living west of the Euphrates, began to penetrate northern Mesopotamia. From the middle of the 11th century the Assyrians were engaged, for about a hundred years, in vainly trying to stem the flood of the Aramaean tribes plundering and devastating Mesopotamian cities.

The period between the 15th and 11th centuries is called Middle Assyrian. The Middle Assyrian laws, the harshest in ancient Oriental history, date from that period.

Originally, land in Assyria belonged mostly to the members of communities, and was regularly redistributed. Beginning with the 15th century, land could already be sold, although it was still nominally community property.

The family was patriarchal, and the father had an almost unlimited power over his children. The wife was, in fact, bought, and her position was little better than that of a slave. After the husband's death the widow became the wife of his brother (the so-called levirate). A married free woman had to wear a veil, which was regarded as her exceptional privilege. Slave women and prostitutes could not wear one, and any violations of that rule were severely punished (a prostitute was given fifty blows with a stick, and her head was dipped in molten asphalt, while a slave woman had her ears cut off).

In that period, slaves were expensive and far from numerous. The rich therefore endeavoured to enslave free farmers by means of usury, loaning them money at exorbitant interest rates and demanding land, houses or family members as security. The law, however, restricted to some extent the creditors' abuse of persons put up as security. For example, the creditor had no right to strike the person thus

pawned, or sell a girl without her father's permission. However, if the loan was not paid back in time, the pawned person became the creditor's absolute property. This kind of slavery was not restricted to any time period. If the loan was not paid back in time, the creditor could do as he pleased with the persons in pawn—he could “beat them, pull out their hair, box or bore holes in their ears”, and even sell them outside Assyria.

There were also indirect forms of enslaving insolvent debtors. For example, the creditor could “adopt” the debtor “together with field and house”, or take a girl from a destitute family “to revive” her, whereupon she became in fact a slave.

*Babylonia in the 12th-8th Centuries B.C.* At the end of the 13th century, Babylonia's decline began. Assyrian and Elamite troops started to raid and sack its cities. In the mid-12th century, an Assyrian host led by its king Ashur-dan I crossed the river Zab in its lower reaches and seized several Babylonian cities. But Assyria was not yet strong enough to inflict a crushing defeat on the Babylonians. The Elamite king Shutruk-Nahhunte I, on the other hand, decided that the hour of reckoning had come, and plundered the Babylonian cities Eshnunna, Sippar, Opis, exacting heavy tribute from them. After Shutruk-Nahhunte's death his son, Kudur-Nahhunte, who became king of Elam, continued to plunder Babylonia, and a Babylonian text says that “his evil deeds were worse than the evil deeds of his ancestors”.

The Babylonians united round their king Enlil-nadin-ahhe (1159-1157) to free their torn country from the foreign oppressors. But the war, which lasted about three years, ended in a complete victory for the Elamites. All Babylonia was captured by the invaders, its cities and temples were plundered; Enlil-nadin-ahhe, together with some Babylonian nobles, was taken into captivity. The statue of Marduk, the Babylonians' supreme god, was taken to Elam. That was the end of the almost six hundred years of rule by the Kassite dynasty, and an Elamite creature was made ruler of Babylonia.

Meanwhile a certain Marduk-kabit-ahheshu (1150-1139) from the city of Isin in central Babylonia declared himself king and placed himself at the head of the fight against Elamite rule. Babylonia

began to gather strength little by little, and somewhat later, under Nebuchadnezzar I (1124-1103), it went through a short period of florescence. A fierce battle was fought and won by the Babylonians near the fortress of Der, on the frontier between Babylonia and Elam. The victors invaded Elam and dealt it such a blow that thereupon Elam was not mentioned for three centuries (until 821 B.C.) in any sources.

After destroying Elam, Nebuchadnezzar won the fame of a popular hero and claimed dominion over all Babylonia. He and his successors bore the title of “king of Babylonia, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world”. The capital of the country was moved from Isin to Babylon.

When Marduk-nadin-ahhe (1100-1083) acceded to the Babylonian throne, an Assyrian army led by king Tiglath-pileser I seized Babylon and burnt down the royal palace. In the mid-11th century, the semi-nomadic Aramaean tribes commenced to raid Mesopotamia, plundering and devastating its cities and villages. In the decades to come, Babylonia grew weaker and, forming an alliance with Assyria, tried to fight off the Aramaeans.

As northern Babylonia was now continually harassed and invaded by the Aramaeans, the hegemony over the land passed to the southern cities, and in 1024 power was seized by the Second Dynasty of the Sealand, an area in the extreme south of Mesopotamia. The first king of that dynasty Simbar-shipak, who aspired to rule over all Babylonia, was killed in 1007. His successors managed to hold on to power for just three years. After that, the separate parts of the country were ruled by several provincial dynasties.

Beginning with the 9th century, Chaldaean tribes, who spoke a dialect of Aramaic, played for many centuries an important role in the history of Babylonia. The Chaldaeans are first mentioned in 878 B.C. in the annals of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II. They lived between the coast of the Persian Gulf and the southern Babylonian cities, in the marshes and among the lakes of the lower Tigris and Euphrates. The most numerous tribe of the Chaldaeans lived south of the city of Borsippa, in the Bit Dakkuri area, while the territory south of this tribe was inhabited by the tribe of Bit Amuqani. Another powerful Chaldaean tribe, namely Bit-Yakin, inhabited the area along the lower Tigris on the border

with Elam. These tribes were semi-nomads engaged mostly in stock-breeding, fishing and agriculture. The Chaldaeans lived in clans and were ruled by their chieftains, who jealously guarded their independence from one another and from the Assyrians, who tried to establish their rule in Babylonia. In the 9th century the Chaldaeans were firmly in possession of southern Babylonia and started a gradual advance northwards, assimilating the ancient Babylonian culture and religion.

Under Shamshi-Adad V (823-811), the Assyrians frequently raided Babylonia and with time conquered its northern part. Chaldaean tribes seized the opportunity and overran nearly all the rest of Babylonian territory. Later, under the Assyrian king Adad-nirari III (810-783), Assyria and Babylon kept up fairly peaceful relations. In 747-734, Babylonia was ruled by Nabu-nasir, who succeeded in establishing a stable rule in the central part of the country, but his control over the outlying areas was very weak. By that time Assyria had become the most powerful state of the Near East and a great threat to Babylon's very existence. In 744, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III, under the plea of helping Nabu-nasir in the struggle against the Chaldaeans, invaded Babylonia and, if we are to accept the evidence of Assyrian sources, subjugated Chaldaean tribes over a vast territory stretching from Sippar in the north to the marshlands of the Persian Gulf in the south, imposing a tribute on them. After that Tiglath-pileser adopted the title of "king of Sumer and Akkad", and Nabu-nasir recognised his sovereignty. The priests, officials, and merchants of Babylonian cities gradually became a reliable power-base for the Assyrians, while the struggle for the country's independence was mostly waged by the Chaldaeans and the lower urban classes.

In 729 Tiglath-pileser III captured Babylon, and for a hundred years Babylonia lost its independence. The Assyrian kings did not, however, turn this country into an ordinary province: Babylonia retained the status of a separate kingdom. Tiglath-pileser went through a solemn ceremony of coronation as a Babylonian king under the name of Pulu, carrying out the old sacred rites on the first day of the New Year. Babylonia was granted considerable independence in its internal affairs.

Sargon II, who became king of Assyria in 721, failed, however, to keep his sovereignty over Baby-

lonia. The chieftain of the Chaldaean tribe Bit-Yakin, Marduk-apla-iddina (the Merodach-Baladan of the Bible, the first Babylonian king mentioned there) took possession of Babylonia and, forming an alliance with the Elamite king Humban-nigash, started a war against Assyria. In 720, a bloody battle was fought between Elamites and Assyrians. Marduk-apla-iddina proudly came on the scene of battle when the defeated Assyrians already began to withdraw. That victory gave Babylonia a ten-year respite.

In 710, Sargon undertook a successful campaign against Elam, and then turned on the Chaldaean chieftain. Marduk-apla-iddina began a retreat to the south of Babylonia and later fled to his homeland of Bit-Yakin. In 709, Sargon entered Babylon and was solemnly crowned there.

Endeavouring to obtain the support of the Babylonian nobility, Sargon gave rich gifts to Babylonian temples and tried to inculcate among his new subjects the idea that Marduk-apla-iddina was a foreigner who had illegally seized the throne. But during the twenty years of that Chaldaean chieftain's rule Babylonia had flourished economically, and Marduk-apla-iddina himself had shown great respect for the traditional rights of the Babylonian citizens, seeing himself as the liberator of Babylonia from Assyrian domination.

When Sargon II died in 705, and Sennacherib acceded to the Assyrian throne, Marduk-apla-iddina, who by that time had established control over the caravan routes of the lively international trade across the Bit-Yakin territory, was able to form a powerful coalition. He concluded alliances with all of Assyria's potential enemies and began to incite the peoples under Assyrian sway to rebel. With this aim he sent letters and gifts to Hezekiah, king of Judah and Sennacherib's subject. Chaldaean ambassadors were well received, and promises of support were given them, despite prophet Isaiah's warning that as a result of such policy the treasures of the king of Judah would be taken to Assyria and his sons made into eunuchs. The Phoenician cities of Tyre, Arad and Ascalon also joined the coalition against Assyria. Sennacherib decided to crush his enemies one by one, turning first against Marduk-apla-iddina, who had, by 703, united the cities of southern Babylonia and the Chaldaean and partly Aramaean tribes scattered over a vast territory. The Elamite king Shu-

truk-Nahhunte II accepted the rich gifts of gold, silver and precious stones sent him by the Chaldaean chieftain, and gave him considerable support in weapons and troops.

In that same year 703, Marduk-apla-iddina captured Babylon and overthrew the Assyrian-backed ruler there. In the meantime fierce battle between the Assyrian and Elamite armies began, but Marduk-apla-iddina, true to his tactics of avoiding decisive battles, did not take any active part in the hostilities. The Elamites were routed and fled to their country. After that the Assyrians were able to drive Marduk-apla-iddina from Babylon, and he stole away into the marshlands in the south of Babylonia inaccessible to the Assyrians.

In 700, Marduk-apla-iddina renewed his alliance with the Elamites. When the Assyrians began to advance, he ran away to the marshlands in the south of Elam. After that he is no longer mentioned in any texts. Still, the Assyrians failed to gain final control over the areas occupied by the Chaldeans.

Sennacherib ordered Phoenician craftsmen to build ships in Nineveh, and in 694 B. C. they sailed down the Tigris as far as Opis, where they were dragged on rollers to the Euphrates; here, warriors and equipment were loaded and the fleet sailed to the mouth of the river Karkheh in Elam. Disembarking here, the troops stormed the Elamite cities on the riverbanks and then returned with their booty. But the king of the Elamites responded with an unexpected raid into Babylonia from the north, capturing and burning down Sippar, and then seizing Sennacherib's son who was at the time viceroy of Babylonia. In 693 B. C., however, Sennacherib inflicted a defeat on the united forces of Babylonians and Elamites at Nippur. In the following year the Babylonians under Mushezib-Marduk rose in revolt against the Assyrians, having formed a coalition of Babylonia, Elam, and the Zagros Mountain tribes, joined by the Chaldaean and Aramaean nomads on the borders of the Assyrian empire. The main battle force of the coalition were Elamite and Iranian charioteers, infantry and cavalry, whose loyalty was bought with gold and other valuables from the temple treasury at Babylon. The Elamite king Humban-nimena commanded the joint forces of the Babylonians and the Elamites. The decisive battle was fought at Halule on the Tigris, not far from the modern town Samarra. Both sides suffered severe

losses, and the Assyrians withdrew to their territory, but their weakened enemy could not even organise a pursuit.

In 690 B. C., when the king of Elam was struck by paralysis, Sennacherib besieged Babylon. Famine broke out in the city, food prices rose 75-fold, and the streets and squares were strewn with bodies, with no one to bury them. In April 689 Babylon fell. Infuriated by the continual conflicts with the Chaldeans and their sudden attacks, Sennacherib decided to mete out cruel punishment to them. Babylon was completely destroyed, the houses of private individuals and the temples were sacked and then razed to the ground, and the population massacred. The few inhabitants that escaped that lot were made captives and then sold as slaves. The site of the devastated city was flooded with water from the canals, so that it would in future be impossible to find even the place where Babylon had stood. The country of Babylonia was annexed as an ordinary province of the Assyrian state.

However, when Sennacherib's son Esarhaddon acceded to the Assyrian throne, he gave orders to restore Babylon and to send the surviving citizens back.

In 669, not long before his death, Esarhaddon divided the Assyrian empire between his two sons. Assyria became Assurbanipal's kingdom, while Babylonia was given to Shamash-shum-ukin. The latter was his brother's vassal, and his kingdom included only Babylon and the nearby cities of Sippar, Kutu, Borsippa and Dilbat. The other Babylonian cities, including Uruk and Nippur, were ruled directly by the Assyrian king.

In 652, Shamash-shum-ukin concluded a secret alliance with Egypt, Syrian princes, the Elamite king Humban-nigash, and the Chaldaean, Aramaean and Arab tribes. Soon a battle was fought near the Der fortress between the Assyrians and the combined forces of the Babylonians and Elamites, but it was inconclusive. In 651, Assurbanipal's intrigues ended in a coup in Susa which eliminated Humban-nigash. Other allies proved unable to render effective assistance to the rebellious Babylonians. For three years Assyrian armies besieged the cities under Shamash-shum-ukin's rule. Epidemics and cannibalism were rife during the long siege. In the summer of 648 Babylon fell, its last defenders headed by their king died in the fires among the ruins, and the survivors were brutally punished.

*The Assyrian Empire.* By the end of the 10th century B. C., the Assyrians had restored their dominance in northern Mesopotamia and mounted a series of aggressive campaigns. At that time, the Assyrian army was superior to the armies of all the other countries of the Middle East in numbers, organisation and weapons.

The Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859) swept through Babylonia and Syria putting to sword and fire the population at the least sign of resistance. Those who attempted to resist were skinned alive, impaled or tied together to form whole living pyramids. The remaining population was enslaved.

During the 876 campaign, the Assyrian army reached the Phoenician coast. When the Assyrians, led by their king Shalmaneser III (859-824), went on a new expedition to Syria, they met with organised resistance from Syria, Palestine, Phoenicia, and Cilicia. This alliance was headed by the city of Damascus. The Assyrian army was defeated in a major battle. In 845, Shalmaneser led an army of 120,000 against Syria, but this campaign was also unsuccessful. Soon there was a split in the Syrian alliance, and taking advantage of it, the Assyrians undertook yet another expedition and managed to establish their sway over Syria. But these conquests proved shaky, and Assyria soon lost its control over the western neighbour again. In the reign of Adad-nirari III, who acceded to the throne as a little boy, the country was actually ruled for many years by his mother Sammuramat, the Semiramis of the Greek legend. In that reign, campaigns against Syria were resumed, and the supreme power of the Assyrian king over Babylonia was restored.

Soon, however, the Urartaeans began to oust the Assyrians from the valley of the upper Euphrates; Syrian states established friendly relations with Urartu, and Assyria gradually lost all its acquisitions in the west.

Late in the 9th century B. C., a long-drawn-out political crisis began in Assyria, which led to civil wars between the military party led by the king and the alliance of priests and merchants in the Assyrian cities. This crisis weakened Assyria, and Urartu, Assyria's main rival in this period, took advantage of it, inflicting several defeats on its neighbour and seizing part of its territory.

Assyria's new rise began in the reign of Tiglath-

pileser III (745-727), who implemented important administrative and military reforms that formed the basis of the country's new might. In the first place, the provinces were divided into smaller units, and the rights of the provincial governors were restricted to collecting taxes, organising labour conscription of the subjects, and leading the troops of their provinces. The policy towards subjugated peoples also changed. Before Tiglath-pileser, the purpose of Assyrian campaigns was mostly plunder, imposition of tribute, and enslavement of part of the population. Now the inhabitants of areas seized during war were moved in a body to ethnically alien regions, while the population of other territories captured by the Assyrians was driven to these newly evacuated areas. More rarely, a people would be left in its homeland, with heavy tribute imposed on it and its territory incorporated in Assyria. The tribute was paid in farming products. The subjugated peoples were also forced to build houses, roads, and irrigation systems, and some were called up to serve in the army.

A permanent army was established, maintained entirely by the state. Its nucleus was the "king's regiment". The army consisted of charioteers, cavalry, whose significance grew under the influence of the neighbouring Iranian tribes, infantry, and engineers. The troops had iron and bronze armour, helmets, shields, spears, swords, bows, rams, etc. Assyrian warriors were good at building fortified camps, roads, at using metal rams and incendiary devices. Militarily, Assyria was now the leading power in the region, and it could resume its aggressive policy.

In 743 Tiglath-pileser went to war against Urartu which aspired to establish its dominion over Syria. After two battles, the Urartaeans had to retreat beyond the Euphrates. In 735, the Assyrians swept through the whole of Urartu and reached its capital Tushpa, but failed to capture it. In 732, Damascus was taken by storm. By that time, Assyria established its sway over Phoenicia. In 729 B. C., Tiglath-pileser seized Babylon. The Assyrian empire now stretched "from the Upper Sea, where the sun goes down, to the Lower Sea, where the sun rises", i. e., from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. In other words, the Assyrian king became the ruler of all the Near East, except for Urartu and several small areas along the borders.

In 722-705, Assyria was ruled by King Sargon II, who had to spend many years fighting the Chaldaean chieftain Marduk-apla-iddina over the possession of Babylonia. Meanwhile the Urartean king Rusa, preparing for a war with Assyria, began winning over to his side small states situated west of Urartu. In 714, Sargon went on his famous campaign against Urartu described in detail in that king's report to the god Ashur. During the campaign the Assyrians crossed the whole territory round Lake Urmia, inflicting severe defeats on the Urartean king Rusa I.

Assur continued to be the capital, but beginning with the 9th century, the kings mostly lived in their residences—Kalhu (modern Nimrud) and Nineveh (modern Kuyunjik). In 707 B.C., Sargon II moved his capital to the recently completed city of Dur-Sharrukin (modern Khorsabad). The next king, Sennacherib (704-681 B.C.) paid a great deal of attention to the orderly planning and amenities of his capital Nineveh. Water came to the city along an aqueduct more than 50 kilometres long from the nearby heights. The royal palace was surrounded by a garden in which many exotic trees and other plants grew, including cotton. The streets of the city were very straight. Whenever a house was built that deviated from the straight line, its owner was impaled, by royal order, on the roof of his own house.

In 681, Sennacherib was assassinated by his two sons in a coup. However, the third son, Esarhaddon, who had been appointed heir to the throne already during his father's lifetime, managed to put down the revolt and seize power. Esarhaddon restored and even extended ancient privileges (the right to local self-government, freedom from labour conscription, etc.) of the citizens of Babylon, Borsippa, Sippar, Nippur, Assur and other cities, previously abolished by Sennacherib.

Esarhaddon's greatest military victory was the capture of Egypt in 671 B.C. An enormous tribute in gold and silver was exacted from the Egyptians, but the triumph was shortlived. In 657, power in Egypt was seized by Psammetichus, a nomarch of that country, and the Assyrians had to reconcile themselves to the loss of Egypt. The year 655 saw the beginning of a long war between Assyria and Elam, which ended in the capture of Susa by the Assyrians. The Elamite king Teumman was beheaded in full view of his defeated army.

*The Fall of Assyria. The New-Babylonian Kingdom.* In the last years of Assurbanipal's reign the Assyrian empire began to disintegrate, torn by rivalry and conflicts between its various centres. In 629 B.C. Assurbanipal died, and Sin-shar-ishkun became king.

Early in 626, Babylonia rose against the Assyrian yoke. The uprising was led by Nabopolassar, a Chaldaean chieftain. In his later inscriptions he stressed that before his enthronement he was a "little man, unknown to the people". At first Nabopolassar made no attempt to attack the major cities. He succeeded in establishing his rule in northern Babylonia, while the centre and the south remained loyal to the Assyrians. Restoring the traditional alliance between the Chaldaean tribes and Elam, Nabopolassar made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Uruk. After that the Babylonians besieged Nippur. But the population was strongly pro-Assyrian, and the siege was unavailing. According to some documents from Nippur, during the many months of the siege the impoverished citizens sold their children as slaves to save them from dying of hunger. In October 626, the Assyrians worsted Nabopolassar's army in a battle and lifted the siege of Nippur. By that time, however, Babylon took Nabopolassar's side, and on November 25, 626 the latter ascended the throne with all pomp, founding a new, Chaldaean dynasty called New-Babylonian. But he still faced a long and fierce struggle with the Assyrians.

Only ten years later, in 616, did the Babylonians succeed in capturing Uruk, and in the next year, Nippur, whose citizens remained loyal to the Assyrian king for a long time despite great suffering and privation. Now the Assyrians were driven from Babylonia's entire territory. In that same year Nabopolassar's army besieged Assur, the capital of Assyria. The siege was not a success, and the Babylonians retreated with heavy losses. Soon, however, Assyria was staggering under a fresh and terrible onslaught. In 614 the Medes captured the Assyrian province of Arrapha, and later surrounded Nineveh, Assyria's largest city. Although the Medes failed to capture Nineveh, they besieged and took by storm Assur, the ancient capital of Assyria, and exterminated its citizens. Nabopolassar, true to the traditional policy of his Chaldaean ancestors, came with his army on the scene of battle when the fighting was over and Assur was no more than a heap of smoking



ruins. The Medes and the Babylonians concluded an alliance, reinforcing it by a dynastic marriage between Nebuchadnezzar, Nabopolassar's son, and Amytis, daughter of Cyaxares, king of the Medes.

Although the fall of Assur was a staggering blow to Assyria, the Assyrians summoned their strength again and, while the victors were busy dividing up the booty, they resumed hostilities in the Euphrates valley, led by their king Sin-shar-ishkun. In the meantime, the combined forces of the Medes and the Babylonians laid siege to Nineveh, and three months later, in August 612, the city fell. It was then plundered and destroyed, and its citizens massacred. That was a kind of poetic justice meted out to a state that for many centuries had plundered and devastated the countries of the Near East, exterminating whole peoples and tribes.

Part of the Assyrian army managed to fight its way to the city of Harran in the north of upper Mesopotamia, where they continued to operate under their new king Ashur-uballit II. In 610, the Assyrians had to abandon Harran, too, driven away by the Medes. A Babylonian garrison was left in the city. But in 609 the Egyptian pharaoh Necho, fearing Babylonia's increasing might, sent a strong army to succour the Assyrians. Ashur-uballit now recaptured Harran, destroying the Babylonian garrison there to a man. Soon, however, Nabopolassar arrived with his main force and inflicted a final defeat on the Assyrian army. The Chaldaean tribes thus won a final and complete victory after many centuries of fighting for the liberation of Babylonia from the Assyrian yoke.

After the downfall of the Assyrian empire, the Medes took possession of the homeland of the Assyrians and the city of Harran. The Babylonians were making ready to establish their control over the lands west of the Euphrates, but the Egyptian pharaoh also claimed the territories of Syria and Palestine.

Thus, only three powerful states remained in the entire Near East—Media, Babylonia and Egypt. Besides, there were two small but independent kingdoms Lydia and Cilicia, in Asia Minor.

In the spring of 607 Nabopolassar handed over the command of his army to his son Nebuchadnezzar, leaving control of the domestic affairs in his own hands. The new general's task was capturing Syria and Palestine. First, however, it was necessary to

take the city of Karkemish (Carchemish) on the Euphrates with its strong Egyptian garrison which included Greek mercenaries. In the spring of 605 the Babylonian host crossed the Euphrates and simultaneously attacked Karkemish from the south and the north. A fierce battle began already before the city's walls, and soon the city became a heap of burning ruins, while the Egyptian garrison was massacred to a man. After that the greater part of Syria and Palestine, that is, nearly all the lands between the Euphrates and Egypt, were subdued by the Babylonians without resistance.

While he was in conquered Syria, Nebuchadnezzar received in August 605 the news of his father's death in Babylon. He hurried back to that city and on September 7 was officially recognized king. In the autumn of that year Nebuchadnezzar returned to Syria, where he collected tribute from the defeated peoples until February 604, and then besieged and took the city of Ascalon (a letter has survived in Aramaic sent by one of the Phoenician kings, apparently the ruler of Ascalon, to the Egyptian pharaoh, begging him for urgent help in view of the approach of the Babylonian army).

In 601 B. C., Nebuchadnezzar's army advanced towards the Egyptian frontier. In the ensuing battle both sides suffered heavy losses, and then Nebuchadnezzar was busy until December 599 reorganising his army. Early in 598 Nebuchadnezzar campaigned in northern Arabia trying to establish control over caravan routes. By that time Jehoiakin, king of Judah, incited by pharaoh Necho, broke off the alliance with Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem and took it on March 16, 597. More than 3,000 Jews were taken captive and driven to Babylonia. Nebuchadnezzar appointed Zedekiah king of Judah.

In December 595 and January 594, there was unrest in Babylonia, most likely originating in the army. The leaders of the rebellion were executed, and order was restored in the country. A record of the trial of a certain Baba-ah-iddin has survived; this conspirator's case was dealt with by a military tribunal chaired by the king himself. The defendant was accused of high treason and breaking his oath of allegiance to the king; he was executed, and all his possessions were confiscated. Nebuchadnezzar then returned to Syria to exact tribute from the population of that conquered land.

Soon the new Egyptian pharaoh Apries, in an attempt to establish control over Phoenicia, seized the cities of Gaza, Tyre and Sidon, and talked the king of Judah Zedekiah into rebelling against the Babylonians. By acting speedily and decisively, Nebuchadnezzar pushed the Egyptian army back to the original border and in 587 B.C., after an 18-month siege, captured Jerusalem. This time Judah was abolished as a kingdom becoming an ordinary province of the New-Babylonian empire; thousands of Jerusalem's citizens (mostly nobles and craftsmen), together with their former king Zedekiah, were taken into captivity. After that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Tyre, whose citizens stubbornly resisted him for 13 years (until 574).

Under Nebuchadnezzar, Babylonia flourished. It was a time of economic and cultural upsurge. Babylon became a major centre of international trade. Many irrigation canals were built. A large reservoir was constructed near Sippar, from which numerous canals radiated, regulating the distribution of water during drought and floods. Old temples were restored and new ones built. The king's new palace was erected in Babylon, and construction was completed of the seven-story ziggurat named Etemenanki (the Tower of Babel of the Bible); the famous Hanging Gardens were laid out. Mighty fortifications were also raised round Babylon to protect the capital against future assaults.

In 562 Nebuchadnezzar died, and from that moment Babylonian nobles and priests began to interfere in politics more forcibly, removing kings that were objectionable to them. Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil-Merodach held on to power for just two years, and in August 559, Neriglissar seized the throne. He died in 556, and his little son Labashi-Marduk was killed after a three-month reign. The throne went to Nabonidus, who was an Aramaean, unlike the New-Babylonian kings of Chaldaean extraction that preceded him.

Nabonidus's father was the chieftain of an Aramaean tribe. His mother was a priestess at the temple of Sin at Harran, and after the capture of that city by the Medes fled to Babylon with her son, over whom she later exercised great influence. On coming to power Nabonidus declared that he had become king at the call of the god Marduk, and proclaimed himself the guardian of ancient Babylonian traditions.

Although Nabonidus worshipped the traditional gods of Babylonia—Marduk, Nabu, Nergal, Shamash, etc., he gradually began to raise to greater eminence the cult of Sin, the moon-god—not the traditional Babylonian god of that name but, in the symbolism and forms of worship, an Aramaean god. In conducting this religious policy, Nabonidus endeavoured to create a powerful empire by uniting the numerous Aramaean tribes of the Near East and declaring Sin the supreme state deity instead of Marduk. However, Nabonidus's religious reforms resulted in a conflict with the priests of the ancient Babylonian temples of Babylon, Borsippa, Uruk and other cities.

In 553, war between Media and Persia broke out. Taking advantage of the garrison of Harran being recalled by the Median king Astyages, Nabonidus captured that city in the same year and ordered the restoration of the temple of Sin destroyed during the war with Assyrians in 609. Nabonidus also conquered the Taima area in the northern part of Central Arabia and established control over the caravan route to Egypt across the desert via the Taima oasis. That route was of great importance for Babylonia, as by the mid-6th century B.C. the Euphrates had changed its course, and the sea trade across the Persian Gulf from the Ur harbour had become impossible. Nabonidus moved his residence to Taima, entrusting the administration of Babylon to his son Bel-sharru-usur (the Biblical Belshazzar).

While Nabonidus pursued an active foreign policy in the west, a new adversary, resolute and mighty, appeared on the eastern frontier of Babylonia. The Persian king Cyrus II, who had already conquered Media, Lydia and many other countries even unto the borders of India, and who had a vast well-equipped army, was preparing for a campaign against Babylonia.

By 546, Babylonia and Egypt had given up their long-lived enmity, for the rulers of both countries were well aware of the need for preparing to fight the Persians. When it became obvious that war was imminent, Nabonidus returned to Babylon and began to organise his country's defences. But Babylonia's position was already hopeless, as it was blocked by the Persians from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf. In Babylonia itself, Nabonidus's position was not firm. Since he endeavoured to undermine the power and influence of the priests of the

supreme god Marduk and neglected the religious festivities connected with Marduk's cult, the influential priests resented their king's policy and were ready to assist any opponent of his. Babylonian merchants were dissatisfied with Nabonidus's policy, too, as their traditional trading routes were now in Persian hands. The commercial circles would welcome the establishment of any great power that would ensure a stable market and safe routes to Egypt, Asia Minor, and other countries. Thousands of people lived in Babylon who had been forcibly taken there from their native lands. These people naturally awaited the Persians as their liberators. The overwhelming majority of the country's population, the farmers and the artisans, were indifferent to Nabonidus's military preparations, ready to accept a new set of rulers instead of the old one. Apart from all that, the Babylonian army had been exhausted by many years of fighting in the Arabian desert, and it was hard to expect that it would be able to repulse the onslaught of the much stronger and better equipped Persian army. Indeed, in October 539 B. C. Babylonia was overrun by the Persians and forever lost its independence.

*Babylonia's Economy and Society in the 1st Millennium B.C.* Agriculture was the main branch of Babylonian economy. A considerable portion of arable land belonged to the temples, members of the royal family, big merchants, and officials in the employ of the king and the temples. The holdings of petty landowners were usually between a third of a hectare and several hectares large.

Barley was the most widespread crop, but spelt, wheat, sesame, peas, flax, etc. were also sown. Dates were a staple food, along with barley.

Precipitation was inadequate, and artificial irrigation was of great importance. The country was covered with a dense network of canals, owned by the state and sometimes by temples and private individuals. Lease-holders could use the water of those canals for special payment.

Petty landowners tilled their lands themselves, together with members of their families. The temples, the king and other big landowners leased their lands to free lease-holders in small lots, as slave labour required permanent supervision and accordingly increased overhead costs. There were no real

large-scale land properties in Babylonia except for the temples' domains, and small-scale farming existed side by side with these estates. When big landowners resorted to slave labour, they preferred to give them land plots for independent farming on a *peculium* basis (for quit-rent) or else leased it to them. Rent was of two kinds: the amount of rent might be determined (depending on the quality of the land) when the contract was concluded, or else the landowner received one-third of the harvest and the leaseholder, two-thirds.

Temples played a great role in the social structure and economic life of Babylonian society. They were major land- and slave-owners, and were also engaged in usury and commerce. A major source of the temples' income were various taxes, above all the temple tithe, which equalled approximately one-tenth of the taxpayer's income. Farmers, shepherds, artisans, and officials all had to pay tithes. In most cases the tithes were paid in barley and dates, but often also in sesame, wool, clothes, cattle, fish, etc.

Handicrafts were highly developed. The sources mention masons, weavers, blacksmiths, copper-smiths, carpenters, builders, jewelers, laundries, bakers, brewers, etc. The craftsmen sold their wares in the market, but more often they concluded contracts with their clients for the making of various products for a set payment.

In legal terms, society consisted of full-fledged citizens, disfranchised freemen, and various underprivileged groups of which slaves formed a considerable stratum.

Full-fledged citizens were members of a popular assembly which was attached to a certain temple and had the power of a court of law where marital and property disputes were settled. These citizens took part in the local temple's cult and had the right to a certain share of the temple's income. State and temple officials, priests, scribes, merchants, craftsmen and farmers were all full-fledged citizens. Legally, they were all considered to have equal rights, and their status was hereditary, although their economic position varied considerably, of course. They all lived in the cities and had land in the rural neighbourhood adjoining the city over which the jurisdiction of the popular assembly extended.

Disfranchised freemen were the royal and military colonists as well as foreign officials and merchants in the king's service, and generally all for-

eigners living in Babylonia. These groups sometimes set up their own organ of self-government. None of them had any civil rights as they did not own land belonging to the communal urban stock and could not therefore become members of a popular assembly.

The underprivileged strata included farmers who had no land of their own and worked, generation after generation, on land belonging to the state, the temples, or private individuals. In legal terms they were not slaves—they could not be sold, for instance. Such farmers lived in rural areas where there was no urban-type self-government.

Slaves, on the other hand, were the absolute property of their masters and had only obligations towards the latter but no rights at all. Hundreds of slaves worked on temples' estates, while private individuals owned three to five slaves. Major business houses had dozens and sometimes hundreds of them. But the overall number of slaves in the country was less than that of free farmers and craftsmen. Agriculture was therefore based on the labour of free farmers, and similarly the handicrafts relied on the labour of free artisans, whose occupation was usually hereditary.

When owners could not use slave labour on their farm or in the workshop, or believed such employment unprofitable, the slaves were sometimes given certain property and an amount of independence in exchange for quit-rent (*peculium*). The size of the quit-rent varied with the slave's property, but it was worth on average 12 silver shekels a year. For comparison it may be pointed out that that sum equalled the average annual wages of an adult hired labourer, whether freeman or slave. The slave himself was worth 60 to 90 shekels (1 shekel equalled 8.4 grams of silver); one shekel could buy 6 bushels of barley or dates.

There were fairly large numbers of slaves in Babylonia who had families, owned houses and considerable property. The slaves could dispose of their property with relative freedom—for example, they could mortgage, lease or sell it. Slaves could have their own seals, they could be witnesses in bargains between freemen or other slaves. Besides, they could take their disputes with other slaves or even freemen (except for their masters, of course) to court. Such slaves could buy other slaves for employment in their business, and hire both freemen and slaves. But even

these rich slaves could not buy their freedom, for only the master had the right to set them free. The richer the slave was, the more unprofitable it was for the master to give him his freedom.

Naturally, only a small minority of slaves were in such a privileged position, while most of them toiled under the supervision of their masters and had no property at all. The most recalcitrant slaves, who made repeated attempts to escape, were kept in special workhouses no different from prisons.

The existence of the institution of slavery seemed nothing out of the ordinary, and there are no signs of condemnation of slavery in Babylonian literature. Neither were there any organised mass uprisings of slaves. The reason for that may have been that there were no large groups of slaves either on the great estates or in workshops based on slave labour. Characteristically, the most striking examples of the struggle of the slaves are found in documents from temple archives. Temple slaves had more opportunity for joint action than privately owned ones, as they often worked in relatively large groups.

Slave labour was mostly used for particularly hard tasks, also for doing jobs that required no skill or costly supervision, that is to say, where they could be used all the year round and not during particular seasons. Complicated work was done by freemen, mostly by hired labourers.

The 1st millennium B.C. saw a considerable change in the forms of the enslavement of debtors in Babylonia. The creditor could have an insolvent debtor arrested and put in prison, but he could not sell him as a slave, and the debtor paid back the loan by working for his creditor without payment. The practice of pawning or selling oneself disappeared completely. As distinct from the earlier periods, the husband could not, for instance, put up his wife as security against a loan, but a freeman could do so with his children. In cases of a debtor's insolvency, his children could be sold as slaves. The rule of limiting the enslavement of debtors to a definite period, established by the Hammurapi Code, was no longer effective in the 1st millennium B.C.

The labour of hired workmen began to play an extremely important role in the overall economic structure; it was especially widespread on the larger estates (particularly those of the temples); where they worked either all year round or during the harvest. It was sometimes difficult to find the necessary

number of labourers, and they had to be hired at fairly high prices. The documents sometimes mention hired gangs of workers several hundred strong. These workers often protested against delays of payment, and they did not agree to work for low wages. This stratum consisted of freemen who owned very little land. Workers were sometimes hired even in the neighbouring countries (e. g., Elam); they were paid in money and foodstuffs, returning home after the harvest.

The crown estate did not on the whole play an important role and was based on the principles of privately owned estates. As a rule, the king's lands were leased. Estates owned by temples and private individuals became the mainstay of the economy in the 1st millennium B. C.

Although minting was invented in Lydia as early as the second half of the 7th century B. C., coins were not used in domestic trade in Babylonia. Payments were made in silver in the shape of bars, rods, wire, etc. These objects contained various proportions of admixtures. They were stamped with hallmarks indicating the standard and each time had to be weighed. Gold was a commodity and was not used as money.

Babylonia played an important role in international trade, being a connective link between the Phoenician-Palestine world and the countries south and east of Mesopotamia. Especially lively was Babylonia's trade with Egypt, Syria, Elam and Asia Minor, where Babylonian merchants bought iron, copper, tin, timber, wine, etc. Alum was brought from Egypt to Babylonia where it was used for bleaching wool and clothes, in the production of glass and for medical purposes. Along with Egypt, Babylonia was a supplier of grain to other Near Eastern countries. Babylonian cities were major centres of the production of woollen clothes that were in high demand in many lands.

Powerful business houses played an important role in domestic and foreign trade, the most ancient of these being the Egibi house. It was in business already at the end of the 8th century B. C. and continued its activities until the beginning of the 5th century B. C., selling and buying fields, houses, slaves, etc. The Egibi house was also involved in banking operations, loaning money, accepting deposits, handing out and receiving notes of hand, paying the loans of their creditors, financing and launching

commercial ventures. The Egibi house was also prominent in international trade.

The Murashu business house operated in the 5th century B. C. in central and southern Babylonia. It was mostly involved in commerce and usury. It rented the lands of officials and military colonists, paying rent to their owners, and taxes in money and in kind to the state treasury. This land the Murashu house usually subleased, providing the sublessees with cattle, seeds, tools and water for irrigation. In other words, the Murashu house was mostly an agricultural credit institution and managed property funds, mediating between landowners and farmhands. In a single calendar year, 423/422 B. C., the profit of the Murashu house from date trade (that was one of the items they sold) amounted to 15,000 bushels or, in terms of money, 350 kilograms of silver.

Just as modern bankers, the Murashu house handled other people's property, but there is a great difference here: Murashu dealt in real estate, not money. A bank controls numerous small capital holdings investing the necessary capital in commercial or industrial enterprises, while Murashu did exactly the opposite, renting large tracts of land and leasing them in small lots to sublessees.

Unlike the Egibi house, which invested capital in commercial cooperatives, Murashu played no role in international trade at all. Murashu sold agricultural products (dates, barley, etc.) inside the country, paying state taxes in silver. The Murashu house was thus a banker, a manager of land, and a commercial enterprise.

The activities of the Murashu house had a pernicious effect on the country's economy, as they ruined the landowners who were often unable to pay back their loans. At first, the Murashu house loaned money to the landowners, but several decades later it began to replace them, concentrating large tracts of land in its hands.

*The Culture of Ancient Mesopotamia.* In the course of three thousand years, from its emergence to the downfall of ancient society, the Mesopotamian culture traversed a long path of development distinguished by its creators' high skill and originality.

One of the most remarkable achievements of this culture was the invention of a writing system, as

early as the beginning of the 3rd millennium B. C. That system was the pictographic script which was used for elementary business records (inventories of cattle and other property, accounts of work performed, etc.). Gradually this script evolved into cuneiform writing, in which each sign consisted of wedges in different combinations.

It is not yet clear which people were the first to invent writing, but the Sumerians were undoubtedly pioneers on the hard path of historical progress, being the first to use writing in the service of civilisation on a large scale.

The earliest surviving texts date from the beginning of the second half of the 3rd millennium B. C., and 250 years later a well-developed system of cuneiform writing already existed. In the 24th century, extensive documents in Sumerian were compiled. Records of Akkadian in Mesopotamia date from the first half of the 3rd millennium, when the Akkadians borrowed the cuneiform script from the Sumerians and began widely using it. In the last quarter of the 3rd millennium B. C. bilingual (Sumero-Akkadian) dictionaries were compiled – the most ancient known to date.

Having absorbed the achievements of Sumerian culture, the Akkadians developed them further. Already at a very early period, Sumerian words were borrowed into Akkadian, and sometimes vice versa. Among others, the Akkadians borrowed from the Sumerians words for such cultural concepts as plough, barley, emmer, ploughman, table, and many terms designating various crafts, cults, and offices of the state. At that early period the Sumerians also borrowed from Akkadian words for onions, slave, and terms of buying and selling.

By the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C. Sumerian gradually disappeared as a spoken language, but it continued to be studied as the language of literature, science and cults until the 1st century A. D., when cuneiform writing went out of use. Sumero-Akkadian bilingualism therefore existed at all stages of the Babylonian culture.

Sumerians and Akkadians wrote left to right. The script included nearly 600 signs, all of which a literate person had to know. Most signs had several values, so that the reader had to rely on the context to arrive at the meaning implied. The cuneiform script was therefore accessible to a narrow circle of professional scribes only.

Cuneiform writing was borrowed from the Akkadians by the neighbouring peoples (Elamites, Hurrians, Hittites, and later Urartaeans) adapting it to their languages, and by 1500 B. C. the whole of the Near East used that script. Simultaneously Akkadian became an international language of everyday communication, diplomacy and science. In the Tell el-Amarna period (1365-1358), the Egyptian court used the Babylonian dialect of the Akkadian language for communicating with their Syrian vassals and other states. Babylonian mythological works have been discovered at Tell el-Amarna in Egypt with annotations by Egyptian scribes.

The natural resources of the country were of special importance for the Sumero-Akkadian civilisation. Unlike Egypt and the other fountainheads of ancient civilisation, Mesopotamia had almost no stone and, of course, no papyrus, which could be used as material for writing. But there was an unlimited supply of clay, so that writing materials were in fact inexhaustible and cost practically nothing. Besides, clay was a durable material. Clay tablets were not destroyed even by fire – on the contrary, they became even harder. For this reason clay was the principal writing material from the very emergence of writing in Mesopotamia.

To increase the lifetime of tablets, they were made of elutriated clay of the finer types. To remove all sorts of impurities – straw, leaves, etc. – clay was placed in water. The mineral compounds were dissolved in water and settled on the bottom of the vessel, and when the water was decanted, the tablet was absolutely pure. The mineral compounds were also removed by means of baking, but as there was no forest in Mesopotamia, only the more important texts were baked in kilns, including those intended for libraries. Most tablets were sun-baked. Usually the tablets were seven to nine centimetres in length. These were mostly economic and business records in cursive. Royal inscriptions were made in large, distinct script. A piece of reed sliced at an angle at one end was used to indent the signs in soft clay.

In the 1st millennium B. C., leather and papyrus were used as materials for writing, too. Babylonian scribes also wrote, in cuneiform characters as well, on long narrow wooden tablets covered by a thin layer of wax.

Beginning with the 8th century B. C., Aramaic gradually became the language of international



trade and diplomacy throughout the Near East. As Aramaean provinces were added to the Assyrian empire, and numerous Aramaean tribes continued their inroads in Babylonia, Aramaic gradually became an everyday spoken language in Mesopotamia itself. Aramaean scribes, who wrote on leather and papyrus, became predominant in Mesopotamian offices. That was a severe blow for the schools of scribes using the cuneiform script, which were now doomed to gradual extinction.

The founding of the most ancient libraries was a most important achievement of the Mesopotamian civilisation. Collections of literary and scientific texts were gathered at schools in the centres of culture—Ur, Nippur, Babylon, and other Mesopotamian cities—beginning with the 2nd millennium B. C. An essential part of scribes' training was copying correctly texts reflecting the basic trends in the written tradition. Large private libraries, reflecting their owners' tastes emerged in major cities where there were many scribes.

The greatest library in Mesopotamia and generally in the ancient Orient was that of the Assyrian king Assurbanipal (668-627) in his palace at Nineveh. Remains of that library were found in 1853 by Hormuzd Rassam under a large mound near the village of Kuyunjik on the left bank of the Tigris. The library was carefully selected. On Assurbanipal's orders, scribes copied books from state or private collections of the ancient cities of Babylonia and Assyria, or collected the books themselves.

Of some of these texts Assurbanipal wrote himself: "I read this tablet and placed it in my palace... If anyone should take it away or put his name next to mine on it, let the god Ashur and the goddess Belet pronounce his death, and let them destroy his name and offspring."

The texts of Assurbanipal's library are varied in content. They include annals, chronicles of the most important historical events, texts of treaties between states, legislative monuments, archives of state administration, myths, fables, epic and other literary works, hymns, prayers, charms and incantations, chemists' prescriptions, lists of animals, plants and minerals, literary commentaries, Sumerian-Akkadian dictionaries, collections of texts in Sumerian with explanations of difficult passages, collections of grammar exercises and examples, etc. There are hundreds of books here embodying the scholarly

achievements of Sumerians, Babylonians and Assyrians. In all, about 25,000 tablets and fragments from that library, covered in clear legible script, have survived.

Assurbanipal's library was not only the largest in those times but also the first systematically selected library arranged in a definite order. Many books were kept there in a number of copies, sometimes as many as five or six, so that several persons could read a certain text simultaneously. Serial texts consisted of many tablets of identical size. Some series included 40 and even more than 100 tablets. Compilation of such series was prompted by the need to gather in one place all the available information on a certain subject. Each tablet was numbered, so that it could be replaced after use. The first words of the first tablet were the title of a series. The last line of each tablet was repeated at the beginning of the following tablet. Literary texts had colophons which corresponded to the title pages of our books. The colophon contained the name of the work, i. e., its first line. If a text consisted of several tablets, the colophon of each tablet indicated the name of the series and the number of tablets in the series.

The "leaves" of the clay books were stamped with the library seal with this inscription: "The palace of Assurbanipal, king of Assyria, king of the four quarters of the world."

The books were classified according to subjects (branches of knowledge) and were kept on shelves which have not been preserved, as the library was on the first floor and crashed down when Nineveh was destroyed in 612. To make the search for a certain work easier, tags were tied by pieces of twine to tablets, indicating the content, serial title, and the number of tablets in each series. These tags formed catalogues of a kind.

By the mid-3rd millennium B. C. there were many schools throughout Sumer already. During the second half of the 3rd millennium the Sumerian school system flourished, and dozens of thousands of pupils' exercises have been preserved since those times.

Just as in later times, the purpose of Sumerian schools was preparing scribes for the economy and the administration, especially for state and temple offices. As a rule, schools were not run by temples, and the curriculum was secular—religious education was not even included among the school subjects.

Schools were centres of education and culture; apart from learning to write, the future scribes acquired certain grammatical, mathematical and astronomical knowledge, depending on their future occupation. Students intending to become scholars had to have a sound knowledge of law, astronomy, medicine, and mathematics. But the main subjects taught were the Sumerian language and literature.

In the Sumerian story of "A Scribe and His Perverse Son", a scribe reproaches his son for not wanting to follow in the footsteps of his father, and admonishes him to study diligently, not to loaf in the streets, and to follow the model of worthy pupils. Another Sumerian literary work tells the story of a son who was believed to be a bad pupil and was therefore often beaten; at the pupil's request, his father invites the teacher to their place, they heap attentions on him seating him in the place of honour, giving him supper and a valuable gift, whereupon he begins to praise the boy as a capable and diligent pupil. In one Sumerian text a former pupil accuses his teacher of failing to teach him anything, although he attended school from early childhood to a mature age. To this the teacher replies: "You are a mature man already, nearing old age... Your time is past, you are a dried-up seed... But it is not too late, for if you follow the advice of your comrades and teachers, you can still be a scribe."

A great many works of Sumerian literature, mostly myths, hymns and legends, have survived. Several poems describe the creation of the earth and of life. The first Sumerian literary work that we know of relates the story of the destruction of Lagash in the mid-24th century by Lugalzagesi, ruler of the city of Umma. Many Sumerian texts narrate stories of the destruction of various cities by raiding neighbouring tribes. Especially popular among these works was *The Lament of the Death of the Citizens of Ur*, describing the horrible details of people suffering from hunger, of old men burning to death in flaming houses, and of children drowning in the river.

The most interesting literary monument of the Sumerians is undoubtedly the cycle of epic tales about the legendary hero Gilgamesh. This epic was most fully preserved in an Akkadian translation, which is the greatest literary work of ancient Mesopotamia. According to the epic, Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, was the son of a mortal man and the goddess Ninsun. But he also figures in a tradition describing

him as a historical personage. Thus, Gilgamesh is mentioned as one of the first kings of the First Dynasty of Uruk in the Sumerian lists of the Third Dynasty of Ur.

In brief, the story of Gilgamesh is as follows. When Gilgamesh began to oppress the citizens of Uruk, the latter appealed to the gods to rid them of the oppression. The gods made a wild hero named Enkidu, who lived with wild beasts. Later, seduced by a woman, he left the beasts and came to Uruk. Enkidu and Gilgamesh met in single combat, but proved to be equally matched. After that they became fast friends and performed many deeds together, killing, for instance, the terrible monster Humbaba, the guardian of a cedar forest.

Soon the goddess Ishtar offered her love to Gilgamesh, but he rejected it. The infuriated Ishtar sent a monstrous bull to punish Gilgamesh, but the latter killed the bull with Enkidu's help. After the battle, however, Enkidu was doomed to die, as he had offended Ishtar. Saddened by his friend's death, Gilgamesh went to the end of the world, to his remote ancestor Ziusudra, who had survived a Deluge in times immemorial. Ziusudra told Gilgamesh the story of the Flood, according to which the gods destroyed everything that lived on the earth, except Ziusudra himself. As reward for his pious conduct, the god Enki warned Ziusudra of the coming flood and ordered him to build an ark and board it before the beginning of the flood. Later that legend was borrowed, even to small details, by the Bible.

At Gilgamesh's insistence Ziusudra also told him where the magic plant of immortality grew. Gilgamesh found that plant after an arduous quest, but he did not eat it, deciding to share it with the citizens of Uruk, to make them immortal, too. On his way back to Uruk Gilgamesh went bathing, and the herb was stolen by a snake who became immortal.

Late in the 2nd millennium a philosophical poem was written in Akkadian entitled *Ludlul bél nêmeqi* (I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom). It consists of 450 verses describing the cruel fate of an innocent sufferer. According to Babylonian beliefs, the world was ruled by the god Marduk. Those who worshipped him expected him to be just, yet he permitted even the most loyal worshippers to suffer without guilt. A righteous man strictly conforming with all divine precepts could be endlessly persecuted. The poem implied that it was impossible to help human

sufferers, as the will of the gods was unfathomable, and men could do nothing but obey the gods:

*Who will learn the decisions of gods in heaven  
the decisions of the gods of deep waters*

*[who will]*

*understand*

*how can mortals understand the divine paths?*

Later this theme was further developed in the Biblical "Book of Job", that virtuous, just and pious man endlessly pursued by misfortunes.

The narrative of the wise scribe and adviser of the Assyrian kings Ahiqar is one of the best known Assyrian literary works. It was known in classical antiquity and translated in the Middle Ages into many languages—Aramaic, Greek, Armenian, etc. Assyrian annals, with their rhythmic style and striking images, can also be counted among literary works.

As early as the beginning of the 3rd millennium B. C., the Sumerians worked out in detail a theological system later borrowed by the Akkadians. Each city worshipped a local patron god. The deities personified the forces of nature and cosmic bodies—the heaven, the earth and water, which were of great importance for the economic activity. These deities were Anu, the god of heaven; Enlil (also called Bel by the Akkadians), the god of the earth; and Enki or Ea, the god of water. These gods were worshipped throughout Mesopotamia, although each of them had his particular centre of worship. Enlil, whose main temple stood at the ancient sacred city of Nippur, was seen as the god of fate. The founding of cities and the invention of the hoe and the plough were all ascribed to him. Highly popular throughout Mesopotamia was the god of the sun and justice Shamash (Utu in Sumerian mythology); Sin, the moon-god, who was believed to be Enlil's son; the goddess of fertility Ishtar (Inanna in the Sumerian pantheon); and the god of the dying and reviving vegetation Tammuz (Sumerian Dumuzi), personification of the eternally living nature.

Many cults were astral, their gods associated with certain celestial bodies. Thus there were the gods of the sun and the moon mentioned above; next, Ishtar was identified with Venus; Nergal, the god of war, diseases and death, with Mars; the supreme god of

the Babylonian pantheon Marduk, with Jupiter; Marduk's son Nabu, who was believed to be the god of wisdom, writing and counting, with Mercury. The supreme god of Assyria was Ashur.

With the political rise of Babylon, the role of the god of that city, Marduk, also grew. The Babylonian myth of creation relates that at first the world was in a state of chaos personified by the monster Tiamat. Tiamat gave birth to the gods, who were so noisy that she decided to destroy them. Marduk (in the corresponding Sumerian myth his place is taken by Enlil) agreed to fight the monster on condition that the other gods would obey him if he should win. When the gods promised to do so, Marduk fought Tiamat and, killing her, created out of her body the sky with the stars, the earth, the plants, the animals, and water with fishes in it. Then Marduk created man by mixing clay with the blood of one of the gods, who had been killed for taking Tiamat's side.

Sumerians and Akkadians also worshipped the demons of good and evil, who were pictured as half-men, half-animals. Particularly popular were the demons of good, imagined in the shape of winged bulls with human heads. According to popular beliefs, special amulets and charms could protect one from the evil demons, who visited all manner of diseases on men.

Sumerians and Akkadians buried their dead in clay coffins. The next world appeared to them as a kingdom of shadows where the dead eternally suffered from thirst and ate nothing but clay and dust. Their heirs were therefore obliged to make sacrifices to them.

In ancient Mesopotamia, however, there were no spiritualistic dogmas, no promises of reward in heaven for the oppressed or punishment for impious men and oppressors. It is a well-known fact that in the Middle Ages and even in later times the eschatological doctrines of paradise and hell were mostly used, except for some critical periods, to help the oppressors to keep the oppressed in obedience. From time to time dozens of thousands of people awaited the end of the world and the coming of the long-promised heavenly kingdom, ready to bid farewell to the onerous and transient earthly existence.

The ancient Middle East did not know any such eschatological doctrines, it had no idea of paradise and hell. Even in the whole of the extensive Old Testament paradise is not mentioned even once, and the

only reward after death which Yahweh promised his worshippers was that he would make their tribe innumerable as the sand in the sea. Contrariwise, the sins of the impious would be visited on the heads of their offspring even unto the seventh generation.

The ideas of reward after death for a pious life, or punishment for an impious one, were even less developed in other ancient Oriental societies, including Mesopotamia. Although religion inculcated in all the strata of the population the need to worship the gods, to observe the morality existing in the given society, and to carry out the obligations connected with a certain social status, this ideology could offer no satisfying answer to the question of why pious men were sometimes pursued by an evil fate while impious ones flourished.

The peoples of ancient Mesopotamia made major advances in architecture. All edifices were built of mudbrick. Royal palaces and temples were erected on high brick platforms. The palace of Mari kings, built as early as the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C., occupied an area of about a hectare, and there were more than 260 inner halls and courts in it. Numerous frescoes have been found in that palace portraying scenes of sacrifices to the gods and of the lives of the rulers of that time. The painters first drew outlines of their pictures and then applied the paints.

The attainments of Babylonian architecture can be judged by the picture of Babylon in the 6th century B. C., when it became a major city in the ancient Orient with a population of about 200,000. The city lay on the Euphrates and two of its major canals. A third of the city lay west of the Euphrates (the so-called New City) and was connected with the rest of Babylon by a bridge 123 metres long and some five to six metres broad. An enormous castle – the royal palace – stood at one end of the city and Esagila, the chief temple of the Babylonians, at the other. The temple was a square edifice, each side 400 metres long, built on an artificial terrace. Esagila formed a single whole with a seven-storeyed 91-metre-high ziggurat lying south of it, which was believed to be one of the seven wonders of the world in antiquity. On the top of the ziggurat stood Marduk's shrine reached by an outside stairway. The shrine was built of glazed brick, its walls were plated with gold, the ceiling was likewise plated with gold and ornamented with precious stones.

A street began at the main entrance to the ziggurat which, gradually widening, reached 35 metres across. It was Marduk's procession street. It ended at the Ishtar gates, which were 12 metres high. The gates were embellished with pictures of fantastic animals made of multicoloured tiles.

Another wonder of the world were the famous Hanging Gardens which rested on high stone walls supporting the soil and all manner of exotic trees planted in it. These gardens were intended for Nebuchadnezzar's Median wife Amytis, who missed her mountainous native land in Babylon.

Babylon was an impregnable fortress. The city was surrounded by a double wall of mudbrick and fired brick, a solution of asphalt being used for mortar. The outer wall was almost 8 metres high, 3.72 metres wide, and 8.3 kilometres long. The inner wall stood 12 metres back from the outer one and was 11 to 14 metres high and 6.5 metres wide. The city had eight gates guarded by the king's warriors. Besides, fortified towers stood on the walls at intervals of 20 metres; from these, Babylonian soldiers could shoot at the enemy. Twenty metres outside the outer wall was a deep and wide fosse, flooded in times of danger.

The cities where Assyrian kings resided were also strong fortresses. The inner halls of the royal palaces in these cities were covered with reliefs; these are now of great historical value. Of special interest among them are pictures of animals, hunting scenes, and battles; they are marked by precision of detail in portraying the anthropological and ethnographic features of various peoples.

Production of glass began very early in Mesopotamia: there are instructions on the making of glass dating from the 18th century B. C. The Iron Age, however, came only in the 12th century, when iron was first used to make tools and weapons.

The cultural achievements of the peoples of ancient Mesopotamia included the invention of a number of musical instruments, such as the flute, the harp, the reed-pipe, etc.

The attainments of Babylonian mathematics are widely known. Originally, they stemmed from the practical needs of measuring fields and constructing canals and buildings. Advances in mathematical astronomy were especially noteworthy. From the most ancient times, multistorey towers, the ziggurats, mostly of seven storeys, or terraces, were

built in Mesopotamia. From the top of the ziggurats, the priests observed the movements of the celestial bodies, year in, year out. A considerable body of empirical observations of the sun, the moon, the position of the planets and constellations was thus accumulated. Among other things, the astronomers marked the position of the moon in relation to the various planets. Gradually the Babylonians established the movements of the celestial bodies visible to the naked eye. They compiled tables of distances between the stars, which have survived to the present day. One of these astronomical treatises describes the principal fixed stars and constellations, their comparative positions, and the periodicity of sunrises and sunsets.

The 5th century B.C. was the most creative period in Babylonian mathematical astronomy. Astronomical schools existed at that time in Uruk, Sippar, Babylon and Borsippa. Pliny the Elder and Strabo wrote of the great Babylonian astronomer Naburianus, who was said to have worked out a system for determining the lunar phases. This Naburianus is, historians believe, identical with the Naburimanni of the Babylonian astronomical texts of the 5th and 4th centuries.

Cidenas, another Babylonian astronomer mentioned by antique authors, is apparently identical with Kidinnu, compiler of many astronomical texts of the 5th and 4th centuries. Kidinnu distinguished between the lunisolar year and the tropical year, and calculated the duration of the latter at 365 days, 5 hours, 41 minutes and 4.16 seconds, i. e., 7 minutes 17 seconds less than the true duration. Long before Hipparchus, Kidinnu discovered solar precessions.

The achievements of Babylonian astronomers were used by other countries of the ancient Orient, including India, and later by Greece and Rome. They became part and parcel of our everyday astronomical concepts.

With all its impressive results, Babylonian astronomy was linked with astrology, attempting to predict the future from observations of the stars. Astronomical texts contain, for example, comments on the connections between the stars and certain illnesses.

By the end of the 4th century B.C., Mesopotamian science had largely exhausted its potential for development. The fossilised forms of ancient traditions, the many centuries of domination of religious concepts without any perceptible changes, and the absence of new methods of cognition of nature interfered with further advances in science. Babylonian science also lost its vital force because the language of the religious cult and even of legal, medical and mathematical literature was Akkadian and, to some extent, the long dead Sumerian, while the people spoke Aramaic.

However, before Babylonian science left the historical scene, many of its basic results were absorbed by the Greeks. The remarkable efflorescence of Greek culture is largely due to its reliance on Babylonian mathematics, Phoenician writing, and many other Oriental achievements. The Greeks themselves willingly admitted their indebtedness to the peoples of the East. Herodotus writes, for instance, that the Babylonians were the teachers of the Greeks in astronomy. Babylonian astronomers' treatises were translated into Greek. Assimilation of Babylonian astronomical knowledge by the Greeks was greatly promoted by a school founded by the Babylonian scholar Berossos on the island of Cos c. 270 B.C. The Greeks thus had direct access to Babylonian mathematics, which was in many respects on a level only achieved again in the epoch of the early Renaissance. Owing to the continuity of the traditions, the achievements of Babylonian civilisation became part of the treasure-house of world culture. It is therefore not surprising that we still use many words borrowed from the Akkadian via various intermediate links, such as "dragoman", "gypsum", "mirrh", "naphtha", and others. The sexagesimal system of reckoning, worked out many thousands of years ago by Sumerian mathematicians, reached modern science by way of Babylonians and Greeks, and we still use it as we operate with minutes, seconds, and degrees.

Mesopotamian culture thus offers a striking example of an ancient Oriental culture becoming a living element of world civilisation, and that explains the unflagging interest for it among scholars down the ages.

## Chapter 3

### *Asia Minor in Ancient Times*

Asia Minor is a peninsula bounded by the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmora, the Aegean and the Mediterranean. The natural resources of Asia Minor were pine and cedar forests, as well as gold, silver, lead and copper, the mining of which began in very ancient times. The principal occupations of the population were cattle-breeding and agriculture.

Asia Minor was one of the earliest areas where agriculture and domestication of animals (goats and cattle) developed, and Anatolia is rightly believed to be the birthplace of mining and metallurgy. Recent archaeological discoveries show that Anatolia was the first locality where native copper was mined and used for making tools; it was also here that the smelting of copper began. Of special importance in this respect were the excavations at Çayönü-Tepesi and Çatal Hüyük, where copper and lead artifacts were discovered in levels dating to the 8th through 6th millennia B.C. The first iron objects made in the Ancient Orient (end of the 3rd-beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C.) were also found in Anatolia.

In the centre of Asia Minor, the Hatti occupied a mountain-ringed plateau along the middle reaches of the river Halys (modern Kizil Irmak); this later became the nucleus of the Hittite empire. In 1906-1907, an expedition of German scholars under Hugo Winckler excavated the ruins of the Hittite capital Hattusa (modern Boğazköy), 100 kilometres east of Ankara, where, among other things, an archive of cuneiform tablets was found, some of which were written in Akkadian and others in Hittite. The archives include annals, royal inscriptions and laws, an extensive diplomatic correspondence with Egyptian pharaohs, Assyrian and Babylonian

kings, literary and religious texts, and business records.

The primordial population of central Asia Minor called themselves Hatti. That population spoke a non-Indo-European language related to the Abkhaz-Adyg group of the Caucasian languages. At the beginning of the 2nd millennium B.C., eastern Asia Minor was invaded (presumably from the Balkans) by tribes speaking a tongue of the Indo-European family called Nesite, or the language of Nesa. The newcomers subdued the local population, which gradually lost its language, was assimilated by their conquerors, and switched to Nesite. But the country continued to be called Hatti, and the surrounding peoples called its inhabitants Hittites. Apart from the Nesite-speaking tribes, Asia Minor was invaded by the Luwians, whose language also belonged to the Indo-European family.

In the mid-17th century B.C., one of the Hittite kings, Tabarna, united the Hatti land, capturing large territories in eastern Asia Minor. Under Mursilis I, Tabarna's grandson, the city of Hattusa, the country's oldest cultural centre, became the state's capital. C. 1600 B.C. Mursilis seized Halpa (Aleppo), an important city in northern Syria. He then concluded an alliance with Kassite tribes and in 1595 B.C. sacked Babylon, which offered no resistance because of an internal crisis. Mursilis then fell victim to a plot.

Between the second half of the 15th century and the end of the 13th, the Hittites waged endless wars. In the 15th century, those wars were directed against Mitanni which was finally subjugated under the Hittite king Suppiluliumas I. After that the



Hittites were mostly involved in rivalry with Egypt over the domination of Syria. Enlisting the support of the Habiru tribes, which lived in the outlying areas of Syria, Suppiluliumas started an offensive against Syria and Palestine, which met with little resistance. The Egyptian pharaoh Akhenaton was at that time preoccupied with his religious reforms and ignored the appeal for help from Syrian rulers.

Somewhat later an Egyptian queen, the widow of Tutankhamen, one of Akhenaton's successors, asked Suppiluliumas to send a son of his to Egypt, to become her husband and pharaoh. In her letter she wrote: "My husband is dead, and I have no son. They say that you have many sons. Could you not send one of them, that he might be my husband." This unexpected and unusual request discomfited the Hittite king, who could not make up his mind whether the Egyptian queen was mocking at him or wrote in all seriousness. Taking his courtiers' advice, he sent a messenger to Egypt to find out precisely the Egyptian queen's intentions. The messenger came back with an Egyptian ambassador, who assured Suppiluliumas that the Pharaoh's widow indeed desired to marry a Hittite prince. But a son of Suppiluliumas was murdered on his way to Egypt by Egyptian nobles unwilling to accept a foreigner's rule. That sparked off a long and inconclusive war between the Hittites and the Egyptians. In 1312 B. C., the famous battle at Kadesh was fought, in which the Hittite army was led by Muwatallish and the Egyptian one, by Ramses II. That battle, too, brought no decisive victory to either side. The hostilities between Egypt and the Hittites continued for several more years, until in 1295 B. C. the Hittite king Hattusili III concluded a peace treaty with Ramses II. The text of that treaty has survived in an Egyptian hieroglyphic version and in several cuneiform copies. The terms of the treaty were acceptable to both sides. The peace treaty was sealed with a dynastic marriage of the Hittite king's daughter to Ramses II. At this time the Hittite state, weakened by a long war and the onslaught of hostile tribes of Asia Minor, was compelled to seek Egypt's help.

At the end of the 13th century, the numerous tribes of south-western Asia Minor (the so-called Peoples of the Sea, whose ethnic origin is not yet clear) united, attacked the Hittite empire and destroyed it; after that, they took possession of Syria as well.

*Economic Life and Social Relations.* For two centuries the Hittites waged successful wars, capturing great numbers of prisoners. Some of them became slaves, but most were made state peasants who tended fields, gardens and vineyards. Although legally these men were not slaves, they were bound to their places of residence. Some of them were given plots of crown land in return for service in the army. Prisoners of war that ended up on private estates became slaves, debtor slavery also existed among Hittites, impoverished citizens sometimes becoming the slaves of their creditors.

Valuable information on the internal structure of the Hittite kingdom is found in the will of king Hattusili I (c. 1650-1620 B. C.), written in Akkadian and Hittite. He largely restored the importance of the ancient Hittite organ of self-government called the *pankuš*, whose members included all free men capable of bearing arms. He also abolished the ancient law according to which the son of the king's sister was appointed heir to the throne: from now on, only the king's sons could claim the throne.

For a whole century the land of the Hittites was torn by internecine strife between various groups of the population, blood feuds and palace coups. All of this made king Telepinus I (the second half of the 16th century B. C.) promulgate an edict regulating succession to the throne. Previously, the right to the throne belonged to the king's kindred, while now it was transferred to the king's elder son from the first wife. If there was no such heir, the throne passed on to the elder son from the second wife. If the king had no male issue, the throne went to the husband of the king's daughter from his first wife. That law was approved by a council which included the king's sons, his relatives, courtiers, and heads of noble clans.

This council played an important role in the life of Hittite society. Thus, the king had no right to execute his relatives without the council's agreement. Even if the council agreed to the execution of a member of the royal family, the guilty party's property could not be confiscated all the same and passed on to the executed man's heirs. If the king executed any of his relatives without the council's permission, the council could sentence the king himself to death.

During the excavations at Boğazköy, two versions of Hittite laws have been found which recorded

criminal and family law. The laws are a valuable source for the study of the economic and social structure of Hittite society. Their characteristic feature was that the severity of the guilty person's punishment depended on premeditation or absence of it. Compared with other Near Eastern laws, Hittite criminal law envisaged relatively lenient penalties, stressing restitution to the victim. However, a slave disobeying his master died a terrible death.

The laws also regulated the warriors' position. A large portion of the free population was obliged to serve in the army. The army consisted of chariotry and heavily armed infantry. The Hittites owed their victories largely to the introduction of a light two-wheeled chariot. Its advantage, compared to other people's heavy war wagons, which only carried a driver and a warrior, was that a chariot's crew consisted of three men, and yet it moved very fast.

*Hittite Culture.* Clay tablet archives from Boğazköy contain literary and historical works, business records, and a great many religious texts. All of these were written in the cuneiform script borrowed from Mesopotamia. But the Hittites also had their own hieroglyphic script which was mostly used for monumental and decorative purposes (it was deciphered by Bedrich Hrozný, the well-known Czech scholar).

Of particular interest are annals, mostly written for the glorification of victories by Hittite kings. Among other things, works of this genre describe in realistic detail the peoples on which the Hittites waged war. The historical style of Hittite annals was later developed by the Assyrians, but the Hittites were more objective in their description of events than the Assyrians.

The "Autobiography" of king Hattusili III, who lived in the 13th century B. C., can also be seen as a historical work. It is one of the earliest biographies in world historical literature. Relating the history of the Hittite state and the king's feats, this text stresses that Hattusili performed all his heroic deeds on orders from and with the help of the goddess Ishtar.

The Hittite culture, and especially their religion, was greatly influenced by the Hurrians, the oldest population of Mitanni in northern Mesopotamia as well as of Syria and southern Asia Minor. A considerable number of Hurrian literary works were translated into Hittite, including, above all, the epic

poem about the god Kumarbi, which runs something like this. When the gods overthrew Kumarbi, he decided to revenge himself on them. He gave birth to a son, a diorite monster that was given the Hurrian name Ullikummi. The latter began to grow, rising from the sea with every hour, and the gods were stunned and terrified. They gathered in heaven to think of ways to destroy Ullikummi. The goddess Ishtar began to sing, attempting to charm him with her voice, but the deaf and blind stone monster paid no attention to the divine call. Then the gods prepared for a joint fight against Ullikummi, in which the latter was doomed to defeat (but the end of the poem has not survived).

The mythological poem of the succession of four generations of gods in heaven was also translated from Hurrian into Hittite, its theme was later developed in ancient Greek literature, particularly in Hesiod's *Theogonia*.

A vast number of religious texts with detailed descriptions of various rituals and prayers, religious festivals and ceremonies, hymns, lists of gods, etc., have been preserved in the Boğazköy archives. Of special prominence among them are king Mursilis II's prayers dating from the first half of the 14th century B. C. These prayers voice a passionate appeal to the gods to put an end to the plague devastating the land of the Hittites. As the texts show, everything was done to find out the cause of the anger of the gods who punished men by sending this terrible epidemic. The author of the prayers was convinced that the anger was caused by the crimes and sins of the ancestors which were visited on the offspring. In his despair, Mursilis tried to persuade the gods to stop the plague for their own good, for, if mankind disappeared from the face of the earth, sacrifices would stop and the gods would be left without food or drink.

Many Hittite religious texts are translations from the Hurrian language. During service, priests sometimes had to pronounce ritual formulas in Hurrian. The attributes of the god of thunder, the principal god of the Hittite pantheon, were two mythological bulls with Hurrian names. An important monument of this synthesis of Hittite and Hurrian religions are the reliefs on a group of rocks in the Yazılıkaya locality north of Boğazköy. These rocks, which at one time formed a temple territory, are covered by reliefs of religious scenes in which Hittite gods are identi-

fied with Hurrian ones. It is the most major monument of Hittite pictorial art.

Yet another of the Boğazköy archive's items is a text on clay tablets of nearly a thousand lines, containing the most ancient manual of horse-training known to man. The treatise is written in Hittite, but its author was a Hurrian of the name of Kikkuli from Mitanni, presumably invited to serve at the Hittite king's court. As these tablets show, hippology was at an exceptionally high level of development among Hurrians and Hittites. According to the treatise, it took seven months to train a cavalry horse.

Certain works of Sumero-Babylonian literature were also translated into Hittite through Hurrian intermediaries. For example, a Hurrian version of the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic has been preserved in the Boğazköy archives, together with fragments of a Hittite translation of it, presumably made from Hurrian.

Two tablets containing part of a Hittite code of law have also been discovered at Boğazköy. It is clear even from this scant evidence that strict monetary tariffs existed, and marital relations and inheritance laws were codified.

Although the Hittite state ceased to exist in the late 13th century, Hittite culture made a considerable impact on world culture in later times, forming an important link between the achievements of the ancient East and of Europe.

*Asia Minor After the Fall of the Hittite Kingdom.* In the 12th century B. C., Asia Minor was invaded from the Balkans by the Indo-European tribes of Phrygians which settled in central Asia Minor. Some time later, Greeks began to colonise the western coast of Asia Minor.

In the 8th century B. C., the Phrygians founded their state, of which the capital was Gordium, on the territory west of the river Halys. Towards the end of that century, Phrygia became, under king Midas, a powerful state, and a major rival of Assyria. In 717, the Phrygians formed a coalition with Urartu and the states of northern Syria against the Assyrian king Sargon II. But in 714, the Assyrians defeated that coalition, and in the following year Phrygia concluded a peace treaty with Assyria. Early in the 7th century B. C., Cimmerian mounted hosts, driven from their homeland in the area north of the Black

Sea, invaded Asia Minor via the Caucasus and put an end to the existence of the Phrygian state.

So far, little is known of Phrygian culture, except for its obvious close affinity with that of the Greeks. Thus, the Phrygian alphabetic script was a version of the Greek one. It may have originally evolved in Asia Minor and later borrowed and improved by the Greeks.

Prominent in Phrygian religion was the cult of Cybele, the goddess of fertility seen as the mother of the gods and of all that is. According to Phrygian beliefs, she lived on mountain tops and drove a chariot drawn by lions and panthers. There is a Phrygian myth that Cybele fell in love with Attis, the god of dying and reviving nature. When he was mortally wounded by a wild boar during a hunt, the gods revived him at Cybele's request. But when Attis fell out of love with Cybele and decided to marry a mortal woman, the goddess appeared at the wedding and drove him mad, whereupon he emasculated himself and died. Later (c. 204 B. C.) the Attis and Cybele cult was officially recognised in Rome. Among its main features were the orgiastic character of worship and the fact that Cybele's priests were eunuchs.

There are many legends connected with the Phrygian king Midas (the last king of that name). Especially popular is the tradition that, at Midas's request, the god Dionysus turned everything that Midas touched into gold. But Midas was cruelly punished for his greed, as any food that he wanted to swallow also became gold. According to another legend, Midas was the judge at a musical contest between Apollo and Pan, and awarded the prize to the latter. Angry at this unfair decision, Apollo gave Midas ass's ears, which he used to hide under a Phrygian cap. Apart from Apollo and Midas himself, only the latter's barber knew of the ears. Bursting to tell the secret, yet fearing the king's wrath, the barber dug a hole in the ground and whispered into the hole, "King Midas has ass's ears". Later, reeds grew up there and told the whole world of the Phrygian king's disgrace.

In the first half of the 7th century B. C., a new important state, Lydia, arose in north-western Asia Minor. Its rise to eminence was largely due to the fertile lands in the valley of the Hermus, which needed no artificial irrigation, and to its rich gold and silver mines. The country's advantageous geo-

graphical position enabled the Lydian kings to control the whole of the sea trade between the Greek world and the Orient.

With the arrival of the Cimmerians on the historical scene, the very existence of the Lydian kingdom was in jeopardy. C. 660 B.C., the rulers of Lydia and its neighbours turned for help to Assyria which was at the time itself worried over the threat to its borders from the Cimmerians. The message from the Lydian king Gyges reached the capital of Assyria Nineveh and was translated to the Assyrian king Assurbanipal. Having repulsed the Cimmerians' onslaught with Assyrian aid, Gyges sent Assurbanipal rich gifts and two fettered Cimmerian chieftains whom he had captured. But then Gyges formed an alliance with Egypt's pharaoh Psammetichus I, who had risen, not long before, in revolt against Assyria.

Soon, however, the Cimmerians under their chieftain Lygdamis again attacked Lydia, which could no longer rely on Assyrian help, of course, and between 657 and 654 B.C. they captured and plundered Sardis, Lydia's capital. Gyges himself, who waited in vain for help from Egypt ("that broken reed", as Assurbanipal put it), fell in battle. But then Scythians, led by their chieftain Madys, son of Prothyas, invaded c. 639 Cappadocia in eastern Asia Minor and defeated the Cimmerians. Lydia's new king Ardys (652-605 B.C.), Gyges's son, renewed the alliance with Assyria violated by his father.

At the time when Lydia gained ascendancy, considerable areas on the western and southern coast of Asia Minor were occupied by Greek city-state colonies. The Greeks managed to establish good relations with the local population of Asia Minor; in some areas (e. g., in Caria), that population was mixed, consisting of newcomers, the Hellenes, and local inhabitants speaking Hittite-Luwian languages. The main occupations of the Greeks in Asia Minor were handicrafts and trade with continental Greece, the Black Sea regions, and the Middle East. Ardys and his successor on the Lydian throne, Alyattes (605-560 B.C.), initiated the policy of conquering the Greek cities of Asia Minor.

During his fourteen-year-long rule (from the 560th year B.C.), the Lydian king Croesus completed the conquest of the Greek cities of Asia Minor and imposed tribute on them. Only Miletus, situated on the southern coast of the mainland, resisted capture by force, yet the Lydians imposed on it a

treaty of alliance stipulating the payment of tribute and recognition of nominal allegiance to Croesus. All the other tribes of Asia Minor west of the river Halys, i. e., Phrygians, Mysians, Paphlagonians and Carians, also became Croesus's subjects, so that he controlled all western and central Asia Minor. It is therefore not surprising that Croesus became the proverbial owner of fabulous riches.

Croesus did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Greek states of Asia Minor, merely imposing a fairly moderate tribute on them. As Lydians had no navy of their own, the sea trade remained in the hands of the Greeks. Hellenic cultural influence on Lydia also played a role in the friendly relations between Greeks and Lydians. The Greeks of Asia Minor did not therefore find Lydian rule onerous at all, and Croesus was remembered down the ages with gratitude by the Greeks. Lydians also established extensive links with the continental Greek world. Croesus sent rich offerings to Greek temples, and sometimes gave valuable presents to citizens of various Hellenic states. Lydians enjoyed certain advantages in Greece. For example, all Lydians were given citizenship at Delphi for all time to come, as well as freedom from trade duties, etc. Croesus gave the Greek temple at Delphi a gold statue of a lion that weighed 260 kilograms.

Soon, however, the well-being of Croesus and his subjects came to an end: in 547 B.C. Lydia was overrun by the Persians.

Lydian craftsmen were particularly famous for their skill in making objects of gold and precious stones, and in dyeing cloth.

Trade played a great role in the country's economy, and commodity-money relations therefore developed fast. That resulted in the invention of minting in Lydia. Lydian coins, the first ones ever made, were minted between 640 and 630 B.C. of electrum (a natural fusion of gold and silver) with a lion's head stamped on the obverse. That was a hallmark guaranteeing full weight and good quality of metal. For the first time it became possible to trade without weighing the metal used as money.

Asia Minor, as a historico-cultural region, played, on the whole, a considerable role in the emergence and development of civilisation in the ancient Orient. It was an area of intense encounters between Eastern and Graeco-Roman cultures, between the Aegean world, the Balkans, and the Middle East.

## Chapter 4

### *The Ancient States of Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine, and the Arabian Peninsula*

North of Egypt, between the Taurus Mountains and the middle Euphrates, lay the East Mediterranean countries—Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, which, throughout ancient history, were influenced by two great civilisations, Egyptian and Mesopotamian.

There were no major rivers here. The most significant of the available rivers were the Jordan in Palestine and the Orontes in Syria. The steppes and the desert areas were, from the dawn of history, the habitation of cattle-breeding tribes. Most of Syria was taken up by semi-desert steppe. In the north, Syria was bounded by the Amanus and Taurus mountain ridges separating it from Asia Minor. The bend of the Euphrates separated Syria from Mesopotamia. The principal routes connecting Asia Minor, Arabia and Egypt lay across Syria.

Phoenicia occupied a narrow coastal strip along the northern Mediterranean bounded in the east by the mountains of Lebanon. Horticulture predominated here: olives, dates and grapes were grown. Fishing played an important role. Cedar forests grew in the mountains of Lebanon along the coast.

Between Egypt and Syria lay ancient Palestine, divided geographically into several areas. A fertile valley stretched along the Mediterranean coast, separated from its northern neighbour Phoenicia by the Carmel mountain ridge. East of the plains lay a hilly plateau, and east of the Jordan valley began the boundless steppes.

Palestine, Phoenicia and Syria made up the western horn of the so-called Fertile Crescent, of which the middle part lay in northern Mesopotamia and the eastern horn stretched towards the Babylonian region near the estuary of the Euphrates and the Tigris.

In 1975, an Italian archaeological expedition excavating the ancient city of Ebla lying under the vast Tell Mardikh mound, with an area of 56 hectares, in northern Syria (70 kilometres from the modern city of Aleppo), found royal archives consisting of many thousands of cuneiform tablets some of which were written in an unfamiliar Semitic language. The texts belong to the period between 2400 and 2250 B. C. and are written in the Sumerian cuneiform script. A detailed analysis of the available material shows that the Eblaite language was similar to Akkadian and Amorite, but a distinct language in its own right.

Most texts from Ebla are administrative and economic records. However, there are also many dictionaries and literary, historical and legal texts. The more significant historical texts include royal decrees, letters of state, and international treaties. Collections of proverbs, charms and hymns have also been preserved.

The study of Eblaite texts is only beginning, but it is clear already that a major state existed on the territory of modern Syria between 2400 and 2250 B. C., whose cultural influence extended south to the Sinai peninsula, west to Cyprus, and north to Zagros. 260,000 people lived in the state of Ebla.

In the 3rd and early 2nd millennia B. C., part of the Syrian steppe was occupied by the Semitic tribes of Amorites, whom the Sumerians called *martu* and the Akkadians, *amurrû* ("the western ones"). These tribes began to settle Mesopotamia in very early times, either peacefully or after repeated raids. Sumerian and Akkadian texts describe them as "wanderers who do not know what a city is, who do not know cereals or a permanent dwelling, or a

grave after death". Although Semites formed the bulk of Syria's population, Hurrians also lived there in large numbers.

The principal occupations of Syria's population were land cultivation, horticulture, viticulture and cattle-breeding.

In the second half of the 3rd millennium, Hyksos tribes captured the territory of Palestine. Later, after the defeat of the Hyksos in the mid-16th century B.C., the hegemony in this area passed to the Mitanni state in northern Mesopotamia, and a hundred years later Egyptian pharaohs extended their rule over Syria. Somewhat later the Hittites established their sway there. When the Hittites were compelled to leave Syria, two unions of small states arose. The northern union was headed at first by the city of Meliddu and later by Carchemish, and the southern, by Damascus. Damascus occupied an advantageous geographical position at a point where the routes linking Mesopotamia with the Mediterranean coast crossed. The main route lay across the Syrian steppe; loads were carried across it on camels, domesticated not long before that. In the 9th and 8th centuries B.C., some regions of Syria were captured by Assyria. In 717, the Assyrians completed their conquests in this area, establishing their rule over Carchemish.

Late in the 3rd millennium small states began to arise in Phoenicia, centred round ports. One of such centres was Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra site), situated south of the Orontes estuary, at the crossing of sea routes from Asia Minor to the Levant and Egypt. Many cuneiform tablets of the mid-2nd millennium B.C., chiefly religious texts and business documents, have been found at Ras Shamra. Some of the texts are in Akkadian language and Akkadian script, while others are in a local Semitic language and a special type of the cuneiform script of 30 signs only, invented at Ugarit.

Byblos, from which timber was exported to Egypt already in the 3rd millennium, lay in the centre of the Phoenician coast. In the south of the coastal area were situated the cities of Sidon and Tyre, which were natural fortresses. Tyre stood partly on the mainland and partly on an island, to which city dwellers moved during an enemy attack. All Phoenician cities were independent from one another. Most of them were ruled by kings, whose power was restricted by a council of noblemen.

During the earliest period of their history, Phoenician cities were under Egyptian rule, but late in the 2nd millennium B.C. they largely became free of foreign hegemony. Beginning with the 8th century, Assyrian kings repeatedly raided the Phoenician coast and gradually subdued all the cities there except Tyre. In the late 7th century B.C. Phoenicia was captured by the Babylonians.

Phoenician cities were major centres of handicrafts. Glass vessels were made here, mostly for export. Phoenician woollen and linen fabrics dyed in purple were very famous in ancient times.

Phoenicians were experienced shipbuilders and courageous seafarers. They dealt in transit trade, buying silver and lead in Asia Minor and copper in Cyprus and selling these and other wares in different countries. In their search for new sea routes Phoenicians went as far as Spain and the shores of modern Great Britain, where they bought tin. Phoenician seamen also voyaged along the western coast of Africa. A description of one such Phoenician voyage led by Hanno has been preserved in a Greek translation. In the late 6th and early 5th century B.C. Phoenicians circumnavigated Africa, on orders from the Egyptian pharaoh Necho; the voyage took them three years and was only repeated two thousand years later by Vasco da Gama. On the Baltic coast, the Phoenicians exchanged their goods for amber. They set up their trading stations on the coast of Spain (thus, modern Cadiz was Phoenician Gades), and founded a colony in Africa that was the seed of the Carthaginian empire.

The Phoenicians' most important cultural achievement was a script to which ultimately all modern alphabets of the European peoples go back. That Phoenician invention, which made literacy accessible to the masses, was a great step in mankind's cultural development. Phoenicians wrote in a syllabic script of 22 signs of simple outline. Each sign denoted either a consonant or a combination of that consonant with any vowel, for which no special signs existed. For instance, the Phoenician sign  $\Delta$  could be read as the consonant *d* or as *da*, *di*, *de*, or *du*, and the reader chose the necessary vowel depending on the context. Phoenicians wrote right to left. They made their business records in ink on papyrus and sherds. Numerous inscriptions carved on the sarcophagi of kings and priests have also been preserved.

From the 9th century B.C., Phoenician writing



began to spread rapidly through many countries. The Greek historian Herodotus wrote that ancient Greeks learnt to write from the Phoenicians. Indeed, even the names of Greek letters are Phoenician words. For example, the name of the letter alpha comes from the Phoenician word *aleph* "ox" (the original form of that sign resembled an ox's head), beta came from *bet*, the Phoenician for "house", *bet* as the sign was originally a simplified picture of a house. The word "alphabet" itself is a combination of the Phoenician words *aleph* and *bet*.

The most popular Phoenician god was Baal. The god of dying and reviving nature, Adonis (familiar from Greek mythology), was also worshipped.

The settled population of Palestine was Canaanite and Hurrian. The very name of Palestine is of Greek origin and means "The Country of Philistines"; the latter were one of the Peoples of the Sea who at one time established their domination over the eastern Mediterranean. When Egyptian influence weakened in the 13th and 12th centuries B.C., numerous small independent states arose there.

Late in the 13th century B. C., hegemony in Palestine passed into the hands of a Semitic tribal alliance that bore the name of Israel. Israel is first mentioned in an Egyptian inscription from 1230 B. C. The ancient Jewish tribes gradually occupied the cities formerly inhabited by the Canaanites, destroying or ousting the latter. As late as the end of the 11th century B. C., however, Canaanite cities still existed, and the ancient Jewish tribes mostly lived in the hilly areas between the cities. At first they were nomads, but later settled and began to practise cattle-breeding, farming, as well as olive-growing and viticulture.

Until the beginning of the 11th century B. C., these tribes were ruled by "judges" elected by a council of tribal elders. In the late 11th century the Israelite kingdom arose. Saul was the first king of that state; he was elected to the throne by the popular assembly. Saul succeeded in establishing his rule over all the Jewish tribes, and won several victories over the Philistines. But he fell in a battle against the latter and the victors carried his severed head all over the Philistine land.

After that David (1004-965 B. C.) succeeded to the throne. He came from the tribe of Judah. He captured Jerusalem and made it the capital of his state. The kingdom grew even stronger under

David's son Solomon. In his time, the temple of Yahweh was built in Jerusalem. Solomon divided Israel into 12 provinces, each of which had to defray the expense of keeping the state apparatus and the court for one month in a year. A standing army was set up.

Under Solomon's son Rehoboam an uprising flared up in the country c. 926, of which the Egyptian pharaoh Sheshonq took advantage, seizing Jerusalem. After that Israel and Judah, which had previously formed a single state, became independent kingdoms (c. 925). Kings of David's dynasty continued to rule over Judah, which occupied the south of Palestine. In 876 Omri, a commander of Israelite troops, founded a dynasty in the north of Palestine under which Israel flourished. Its capital was the city of Samaria. But in 722, Samaria fell to the Assyrians, and the Israelite kingdom ceased to exist; a considerable portion of its population was captured and driven to Mesopotamia.

In 597 B. C., Babylonia established its rule over Judah. Soon, however, Judah rose in rebellion. In 586 Jerusalem was taken by the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II, its temple was destroyed, and more than 10,000 citizens (mostly noblemen and artisans) were taken captive and driven to Babylonia. That put an end to the existence of the kingdom of Judah.

The most outstanding monument of Old Jewish literature is the Bible—a collection of chronicles, numerous works on law, and the books of prophets. The latter form a significant portion of the Bible and are a characteristic product of the socioeconomic situation in Israel and Judah in the 10th-7th centuries B. C., marked by a rapid development of class contradictions, enrichment of aristocracy, and enslavement of the common people. In their religious and political sermons the prophets idealised the past times, when the tribes were not yet divided into the rich and the poor, and condemned such sores of contemporary slave-owning society as enslavement of debtors and impoverished commoners, and forced buying of their land by creditors. Since the state and its concomitant social contradictions appeared among the Jews later than in the neighbouring Canaanite city states, the prophets believed that the social oppression was due to the mixing of the Jews with the local Palestine population and the pernicious influence of their state institutions and reli-

gious concepts. The prophets therefore denounced not only the social vices of contemporary society but also the polytheistic cults of the neighbouring peoples, whose gods were also worshipped by many Jews. The prophets called for a purification of the faith in the Jewish god Yahweh from pagan cults.

Most of the territory of the Arabian Peninsula was taken up already in great antiquity by dry steppes and deserts, and agriculture was only possible in a few oases. The steppes were the habitation of nomad Arab tribes, whose main occupation was cattle-breeding. Their pack animal was the dromedary, the one-humped camel. The population spoke various languages all related to the Arabic.

The basis of the economy in southern Arabia was irrigation agriculture, and already by the end of the 2nd millennium B. C. a civilisation had emerged here that is known to us from remnants of dams, ruins of palaces and temples, and fairly abundant inscriptions left by Minaean- and Sabaean-speaking tribes.

The oldest of the Arabian states was the Minaean kingdom (12th-7th centuries B. C.). Another major state, the Sabaean kingdom, existed approximately from the mid-10th century to the end of the 2nd century B. C. In both kingdoms, the most important issues of state were decided by a popular assembly which imposed strict limitations on royal power.

In the middle of the 1st millennium B. C., the kingdoms of southern Arabia began to play an important role in international trade. The principal export commodity were perfumes. Arabia was also engaged in transit trade in spices and precious stones, which came by the sea routes from India and the Somalian coast of Africa and then were taken by caravan to various cities of the Near East and the Mediterranean.

In 1947 and in the years that followed, several discoveries of manuscripts, believed to be among the major archaeological finds of the 20th century, were made in the caves of the Wadi Qumran locality in modern Jordan, near the north-western corner of the Dead Sea. Some 40,000 parchment and papyrus fragments of varying size in Hebrew and Aramaic were brought to light. These are all that remains of a library of about 600 books—an immense library for those times. It belonged to a religious community that existed in the desert from the 2nd century B. C.

to the 1st century A. D., a community implacably opposed to the official priesthood in Jerusalem, the capital of the Judaeen province of the Roman empire at the time.

The manuscripts fall into three large groups: Biblical texts, Apocrypha, and works written by the members of the commune. Of these, only 11 books have been preserved in a more or less complete form.

Some of the texts throw light on the community's ideological views. The manuscripts include the *Manual of Discipline*, a scroll concerning the coming *War of the Sons of Light with the Sons of Darkness*, collections of eschatological and messianic texts, and liturgical works. The *Manual* sets out the goals of the community, the procedure for recruiting new members, and the rules regulating the relationships between community members. According to the views of the authors of those books, the world was the scene of eternal conflict between the forces of light, kindness and truth, as represented by the sect itself, and the kingdom of the "sons of darkness", which included all the rest of the world; the conflict would continue for a long time with varying success but would ultimately end in a victory for the "sons of light".

The community was a closed entity, built on collectivist principles and hostile to rich men. Each new member had to go through a two-year initiation period, whereupon all his property was handed over to the community. Working together, collective ownership of property, taking meals together, and joint religious rituals were obligatory for all. The members of the community had to observe various rigorous regulations for fear of incurring severe punishment. The highest organ of self-government was the general meeting of the members of the community, which elected the officials.

The significance of the Qumran scrolls goes far beyond the fact that they provided information about previously unknown sect that was an immediate precursor of early Christian communities. These texts are also important for the study of the entire Old Testament literature. The materials that have survived *in toto* include two versions of the Book of Isaiah, an Aramaic translation of the Book of Job, the Book of Psalms, the Book of Ezekiel, and others. The Old Testament was officially recorded in the 7th and 8th centuries A. D. by learned keepers of the Jewish tradition (the so-called Masoretes, a word

derived from the Hebrew *masorah* "legend", "tradition"), and no revisions of it were later allowed. The text still exists in that form. The oldest extant manuscripts of the Masoretic text of the Bible date from the late 9th and early 10th centuries. A. D. Of the other ancient translations of the Bible, of special significance is the Greek translation made in Egypt in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B. C. (the Septuagint, or translation of 70 learned men), differing in important respects from the canonical Masoretic text. The earliest Septuagint manuscript has survived in a 4th century A. D. version, whereas the earliest Biblical texts from Qumran date to the 4th century B. C., and the latest, the 1st century A. D. Owing to the sensational Qumran finds, scholars now have at their disposal manuscripts a thousand

years older than any of the earlier known texts of the Bible. This provided a new textological basis for the study of the Bible, as the Qumran texts differ in many important aspects from the later, canonical redaction of the Bible. For example, a Qumran scroll contains 44 psalms, of which 37 are canonical and seven apocryphal, that is to say, not included in the Masoretic canon. Neither did the Masoretes include in the final redaction of the Bible a great number of works hostile to the prevailing official religion. These works, regarded as heretical, were to be buried in oblivion. So, only a few of the works were preserved in Greek, Latin and other ancient translations. In the Qumran scrolls, however, the originals of some works believed to be irretrievably lost were recovered.

## Chapter 5

### *Transcaucasia in Antiquity*

Transcaucasia and the Armenian uplands were among the regions of the ancient Orient where farming began to develop in the fertile valleys at a very early date. The upland steppes and Alpine meadows were particularly suitable for cattle grazing, and the mountains were rich in ores. The diversity of the natural conditions was also the cause of ethnocultural variety—sometimes tribes occupying neighbouring valleys spoke different languages. Effective farming of the lowlands required an extensive and complex system of irrigation. That explains the somewhat slow rate of initial historical development: class society and the state appeared here in the 11th-9th centuries B.C. in Urartu, which reached the peak of its power in the 8th century B.C. Urartu remained for a long time a little-studied civilisation of the ancient East, overshadowed by the better-known Assyria and Babylonia. Russian and Soviet Orientalists—M. V. Nikolsky, I. I. Meshchaninov, G. A. Melikishvili—published Urartean written monuments with comprehensive comments, which became a reliable foundation for the study of that “forgotten kingdom”. B. B. Piotrovsky’s excavations of the Urartean city of Teishebaini, the ruins of which, not far from Yerevan, are now called Karmir-blur, brought to light many aspects of the Urartean civilisation. The archaeological studies of recent decades have enabled scholars to describe the material culture of such ancient states of Transcaucasia as Colchis, Iberia, Albania, and the ancient Armenian empire.

The beginnings of intense development of Transcaucasian cultures lie in the 6th and 5th millennia B.C., when small settlements of farmers and cattle-

breeders existed in the valleys of the Kura and the Araxes, mostly along the banks of their small tributaries. They were well studied during the excavations at Shomu-tepe in Azerbaijan and Shulaveri in Georgia. Their inhabitants lived in circular mud-brick houses and used various tools of flint, stone and bone. At later stages of that culture, copper artifacts appeared. The basis of their economy was hoe farming and livestock-breeding.

Further cultural and economic advances were made in the 3rd millennium B.C., when the Kura-Araxes culture of the early Bronze Age developed on the Armenian uplands and in Transcaucasia. A large part of tools were at that time made of a fusion of copper and arsenic. A primitive wooden plough was used in field cultivation. The population grew, and relatively large centres rose next to the small settlements, sometimes encircled by a defensive wall and centred round a cultural focus—the shrine. Besides tilling the plains and mountain valleys, Transcaucasian tribes also drove their herds high up into the mountains, where a special type of the economy evolved: herds were driven up to Alpine meadows in summer and taken down into valleys in winter.

The tribes that settled in the mountain areas became the masters of ore deposits there—yet another source of their wealth. During the 2nd millennium B.C. those tribes rose to prominence, and tribal chieftains and rich noblemen began to oppose themselves to the ordinary commoners as burials clearly show. Great stone mounds were raised for the tombs of tribal chiefs on the uplands, up to 80 and 100 metres in diameter. Vast halls, measuring up to

150 square metres, were erected under the mounds, their walls built of large stones. The halls contained the tomb itself, complete with the hearse, a massive four-wheeled wagon, and numerous grave goods lay, including richly ornamented ceremonial weapons of silver, and vessels embellished with reliefs of precious metals. Such mounds of tribal nobles have been excavated on the high-lying plateau at Trialeti south-west of Tbilisi, and they are also known to exist at other sites.

Accumulation of wealth, development of economic and social inequality, and ethnic diversity led to intertribal conflicts. Numerous large fortresses of stone blocks rose in the mountains. Production of weapons became a specialised craft; light chariots were built in ever greater numbers, and at the end of the 2nd millennium B. C., iron weapons appeared. Well-equipped warriors formed the bodyguards of tribal chieftains. The burials of such warriors, entombed with their weapons and armour, became especially numerous in the 13th-11th centuries B. C. The gap between successful chieftains, relying on the loyalty of their troops, and the bulk of the commoners grew, and the disintegration of the primitive communal relations accelerated.

That process was especially intense among the Urartu tribes inhabiting the Lake Van area. Assyrian sources of the 13th century B. C. mention eight countries bearing the common name of Uruatri. At the end of the 12th century, the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser I went on a campaign to the Lake Van area. He left records of his triumphs over 23 "kings" of this region, who had chariots and palaces. Presumably the reference is to the heads of small territorial confederations similar to the chieftains buried in the Trialeti mounds.

The fertile lands in the Van area facilitated the development of agriculture, and the area soon became the centre of a new state in the ancient East. During the 11th and 10th centuries, the small "kingdoms" were gradually united into a single major state. At any rate, documents from the time of the Assyrian king Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B. C.) mention a single country named Urartu, instead of the former numerous small possessions. Another confederation of Urartean tribes, called Musasir, took shape south-west of Lake Urmia. A common Urartean cult centre was situated here, which included the more popular temples and shrines. The Assy-

rians went on campaigns of plunder against the Urartaeans. The need for uniting forces in the struggle against Assyrian aggression stimulated the consolidation of the first Urartean states.

The first ruler of united Urartu was king Aram (864-845 B. C.), against whom the Assyrian king Shalmaneser III led his armies. These campaigns were in part traditional raids regularly undertaken by Assyria to obtain booty, capture slaves and intimidate the neighbouring peoples. Assyrian politicians, however, also felt the potential threat of the young state. Descriptions of these campaigns are found in Assyrian sources, naturally inclined to interpret the events in a light favourable to Assyria. During the 859 campaign areas south of Lake Van were devastated, and in 856, according to Assyrian records, the Assyrians inflicted a second defeat on Aram capturing the "royal city" Arzaskun. These raids did not, however, affect the main areas of Urartu and Musasir, and the growth and strengthening of the new state continued, contrary to the hopes of Nineveh's rulers.

The Urartean ruler Sarduris I (835-825 B. C.) gave his farfetched ambitions an official stamp by adopting a splendid title borrowed from the Assyrian kings, merely substituting the name of Urartu for that of Assyria. That was a direct challenge to the power and prestige of Assyria, one of the greatest states of the ancient East. The city of Tushpa was made the capital of the Urartean state, and mighty stone walls were raised round it. Small principalities were united under the aegis of the Tushpa ruler, becoming a single state organism.

The Urartean king Isspuinis (825-810 B. C.) vigorously worked towards the creation of a strong state. Sarduris's inscriptions had been made in Assyrian, while now all the official texts were compiled in Urartean, in a slightly altered Assyrian cuneiform script. The young state asserted its independence with increasing vigour. The boundaries of the Tushpa rulers' possessions were extended to Lake Urmia, and the Urartaeans' other state, Musasir, became their dependency. Now all the Urartean tribes were united in a single state, which marked an important stage in the ancient history of Transcaucasia.

A religious reform was implemented to unite the new state ideologically. Three main deities—the god of heaven Chaldiš, the god of thunder and rain

Teisheba, and Shivini, the sun-god – were given special prominence. Particular attention was lavished on the ancient religious centre of the Urartean tribes, Musasir, with its main temple of Chaldeis, the supreme god of the Urartean pantheon. Cult buildings were erected here in the name of Isspuinis and his son, and rich offerings to the Chaldeis temple were made of weapons, copper vessels, and numerous herds of cattle and flocks of sheep. Simultaneously, almost the whole of the state became involved in intense construction, as recorded in Isspuinis's numerous inscriptions on the temples and palaces he built. Isspuinis also set up numerous temple estates. But that was only one aspect of the young state's vigorous activity. Isspuinis's inscriptions also related the story of his numerous campaigns. Urartean armies raided the Mana state south-east of Lake Urmia. During these raids, the Urartaeans captured numerous herds as their prize, but, unlike the Assyrians, they did not devastate the territories they subdued. Isspuinis's inscriptions state that a share of the property was left to the vanquished, who henceforth had to provide reliable support for the Urartu state.

A whole series of inscriptions mentions the name of Menuas, Isspuinis's son, next to Isspuinis himself. That outstanding statesman must have begun to play a prominent role already in his father's lifetime. Although Menuas's name does not appear in Assyrian sources, it was this ruler who was the true architect of Urartu's might. He personally took a hand in many undertakings. A memorial stele has been preserved, the inscription on which records the fact that Menuas on his mount Artsibini (Eagle) cleared the distance of 22 ells, i. e., 10 metres 20 centimetres, which is close to modern achievements.

Part of the official annals has survived describing, year after year, the activities of that enterprising ruler. Incidentally, these annals were also one of Menuas's innovations. He paid special attention to the army. There are reasons to believe that during his reign the central authority fully assumed the burden of providing the army's equipment, which had earlier been imposed on vassals. Menuas's campaigns followed two routes – south, towards Syria, where his troops subdued the left bank of the Euphrates, and north, towards Transcaucasia. The administration of territories under Urartu's dominion was his particular concern. Apparently in some cases the power of the local kings was preserved

(“on condition of paying tribute”), but at the same time governors of the provinces, representing central power were also appointed. An administrative reform – the division of the state of Urartu into provinces run by governors – was most likely implemented in Menuas's time. In many cases fortresses were built in annexed areas, which consolidated Urartu's military presence and at the same time became centres of administrative and economic activity. Thus the fortress Menuakhinili, built on the right bank of the Araxes, became an important strong point in the Urartaeans' further advance into Transcaucasia. Menuas was also a great builder. More than a hundred inscriptions have been preserved in which Menuas's name is mentioned, and most of them are connected with some construction project. Near the capital, Tushpa, a 70-kilometre-long canal was built; in some places the water flowed along aqueducts 10 to 15 metres high. Apart from that structure, which was called the “Menuas canal” in antiquity, canals were also laid in other areas of the kingdom. Irrigation farming with its high and stable harvests was apparently intended by the Urartu government to be the basis of the country's economic might.

Under Menuas's son and successor Argistis (786-764 B. C.), that strong and well-organised state joined the decisive battle with Assyria for hegemony over the Near East and for the domination of the principal trading routes crossing the eastern Mediterranean areas. Argistis's rule was the peak of Urartu's might. It is no accident that Assyrian texts describe that Urartean king in terms of barely concealed fear: “Argistis, the Urartean, whose name is awesome as a thunderstorm, whose forces are great...” Urartu's official annals describe military triumphs side by side with important measures to advance the country's economy. Argistis also records his victories over Assyrian armies. Assyrian records mention a series of campaigns or rather encounters with Urartean troops, but, judging from Urartu's growing influence, they were unable to stop the advance of Urartu's armies or put an end to Urartu's increasing might. In a series of campaigns and treaties of alliance in the south, Argistis executed a flank advance against Assyria. Urartu's armies went far into northern Syria, winning over local rulers to their side. In the south-east, drawing the Manneian kingdom in the sphere of their in-



fluence, the Urartaeans moved down the mountain valleys to the basin of the Diyala, practically reaching the borders of Babylonia. As a result, Assyria found itself surrounded on three sides by Urartu and its allies.

Argistis attached special significance to his move into Transcaucasia. Here Urartean armies went as far as the borders of Colchis in western Georgia, crossing the Araxes and taking possession of the extensive territories on its left bank as far as Lake Sevan. A comprehensive programme of economic measures and construction was implemented in the annexed territories. A major city, Argistikhinili, was built in 776 near Armavir, and the city of Yerebuni was erected on the site of modern Yerevan in 782. Four canals were built in the area of Argistikhinili, and vineyards and gardens were laid out. Gigantic granaries were built in the new fortress cities, where the state's store of grain was accumulated. That far-sighted policy of creating a second important economic centre of the Urartu state in Transcaucasia, in an area remote from the main theatre of military operations, was fully justified by the subsequent events.

Sarduris II (764-735 B. C.) continued the policy of his father. Military campaigns and construction projects were the principal occupations of that Urartean king. At the beginning of his reign he implemented a defence reform, finally rejecting the system (of which only traces must have survived by that time) of volunteer forces raised by the Urartean communities. The formation of a royal army fully equipped by the state was thus completed. Sarduris II's campaigns followed at first Argistis's scheme of outflanking Assyria. A decisive battle for hegemony in the Near East was imminent, and at that moment Assyria struck the first retaliatory blow.

In Assyria itself, the internal situation had become stabilised. The resolute and cruel Tiglath-pileser III had come to power and considerably increased the might of the Assyrian army. In 734, the renovated armed forces of Assyria engaged the coalition headed by Urartu in a battle near the city of Arpad in northern Syria. The allies were defeated, and Sarduris retreated to the Urartean homeland. In 735, Tiglath-pileser struck a blow at the very heart of Urartu, the Lake Van area. Assyrian texts describe that campaign in glowing terms. Urartu had undoubtedly suffered a defeat, and a number of its cen-

tral districts were put to fire and sword. But the results of Tiglath-pileser's campaign should not be exaggerated. Assyrians besieged Urartu's capital Tushpa, but failed to capture its fortified citadel. The Musasir area, threatening Assyria's homelands from the north, remained intact, in the military-strategic sense. Assyria defeated Urartu in an open military conflict, but the fight for primacy was not yet over.

Assyria therefore gathered strength for a second assault against its principal rival. The blow was dealt during the reign of the next Urartean king, Rusa I (735-713 B. C.). On acceding to the throne, Rusa found his father's state somewhat weakened by the military defeats. There was unrest among the military, and the new ruler took vigorous measures to crush it. After routing the rebellious warlords, he broke up the administrative units of Urartu into smaller provinces, to prevent further mutiny. In his foreign policy, Rusa tried to avoid an open confrontation with Assyria, supporting at the same time anti-Assyrian attitudes wherever he could. An active foreign policy in the south was hampered by the incursions of Cimmerian nomads into the northern areas of Urartu. But Urartean possessions in Transcaucasia were regularly extended, and new cities were founded there. Rusa I vigorously worked on the building of a powerful economic complex in the area north of Lake Urmia. It may be assumed that a military-economic basis was established here in order to support Urartu's ally, the kingdom of Mana, which feared the growth of Assyrian might. Rusa I also took special care of the traditional focus of his state, the Lake Van area. A large water reservoir was built there, vineyards and fields were laid out, and a new city of Rusakhinili rose, which some researchers are inclined to regard as Urartu's capital under Rusa I.

Observing Rusa's vigour in consolidating Urartu's might, Assyria hurried to strike the second blow. The new campaign was carefully prepared. In 714, Assyrian troops led by Sargon II moved into the areas east of Lake Urmia, where the local rulers, skilfully incited by Urartu's king, were hostile to Assyrians. Rusa I, too, believed this to be an opportune moment for a decisive battle and tried to attack Sargon's army from the rear. The battle took place in a mountainous area and ended in a defeat for the Urartaeans. Urartu's army lost its chariots and

cavalry, but on the whole apparently retreated in complete order, contrary to the boasts of Sargon II's chronicle. After their victory, the Assyrians repeated, as it were, Tiglath-pileser's preventive campaign, but along a different route. Sargon II moved round Lake Urmia and devastated the economic complex being built there. The Assyrians then skirted Lake Van but did not dare enter the Urartean homelands with the cities of Tushpa and Rusakhinili. On his way back to Assyria, Sargon II, at the head of 1,000 horse, raided in a sudden move the Urartean cult centre of Musasir, where the triumphant Assyrians seized immense treasures of temples accumulated during the reigns of many Urartean kings. All along the route the Assyrians did their best to inflict as great a damage on the enemy as they could and thus to undermine Urartu's economic might. Cities were destroyed, granaries turned to heaps of ruins, and fields trampled. Sargon II's annals report that, on learning of the seizure of Musasir, Rusa I committed suicide. But some sources indicate that in 713 Rusa still continued to fight against Assyria.

The importance of the 714 campaign, in terms of international relations in that region of the ancient Orient, was great. Urartu suffered a final defeat in the struggle for political hegemony in the Near East, ceding that role to Assyria. The almost century-long confrontation between Urartu and Assyria ended in a victory for the Assyrian empire.

In later years, the two sides avoided direct conflicts. Argistis II (713-685 B. C.) campaigned mostly in the east, going as far as the Caspian. The Urartean kings continued their traditional policy: conquered lands were not devastated but rather made tribute-paying vassals. Argistis II went on building irrigation systems in the central areas of the Urartean state, near Lake Van. This more or less stable situation continued under Rusa II (685-645 B. C.). Despite isolated conflicts, relations between Urartu and Assyria were on the whole peaceful and friendly. Assyria extradited Urartean runaway slaves, and Urartu's ambassadors were favourably received at the court of Assurbanipal. It seems that Rusa II concluded a peace treaty with the Cimmerians and went on successful campaigns with them to Asia Minor. In Transcaucasia, he built extensive irrigation systems and the city of Teishebaini (now the Karmir-blur site).

Yet the real threat to Urartean might did not come from the Assyrian state but from the Scythian nomadic tribes which invaded the Near East and founded their kingdom in the 670s. The Scythians soon inflicted a defeat on Urartu's allies, the Cimmerians. Several regions of Urartu apparently suffered at the same time. These blows were all the more dangerous as they affected Urartu's hinterland, which had remained practically inaccessible to Assyrian aggression. Driven to a defensive policy and deprived of the countless prisoners of war that had previously invigorated the economy after successful raids, Urartu became markedly weaker, surrendering its positions, once so solid, on the international arena. In the second half of the 7th century B. C. Urartu no longer claimed equality with the Assyrians. In his letters to the Assyrian king, Urartu's ruler now called the addressee "king" and "master". Construction work in the Van area and in Transcaucasia continued, but its scale diminished. Early in the 6th century B. C. Urartu became a vassal of Media, a new power in the ancient Orient, and by 590 it ceased to exist as an independent state. The Teishebaini excavations, conducted by Soviet archaeologists under B. B. Piotrovsky, revealed a striking picture of the downfall of the last Urartean strongholds in Transcaucasia, which were stormed, plundered and burned.

Excavations and inscriptions give a clear picture of Urartu's economic development. The state paid a great attention to the economy, particularly to irrigation in farming – the building of irrigation canals and reservoirs. Royal estates, which almost all of the Urartean rulers founded in their respective reigns, played a considerable role in the economy. We know of the existence of "Menuas's vineyard", "Sarduris's vineyard", and of large estates – "the valley of Menuas", "the valley of Rusa II". When Teishebaini was built, Rusa II simultaneously constructed a canal and set up large-scale farms. According to tentative reckoning, the granaries and wine cellars of Teishebaini were intended to store products obtained from an area between 4,000 and 5,000 hectares. Cuneiform records show that the staff of the royal estate at Rusakhinili was about 5,500 people. On royal estates, agricultural products were processed at artisans' workshops. Temple estates were less significant. Urartean temples were small in size, their wealth was based on the offerings of all

kinds of utensils and objects of art. In a few cases the temples had their own arable fields and herds.

Urartu's social structure fully reflects the distinctive features and contradictions characteristic of the slave-owning societies of the ancient Eastern type. Commoners, designated by the term "the armed free men of the tribe", constituted a considerable portion of the population. The community retained to some extent its self-government and played an important role in agricultural production. Communities also had slaves at their disposal. The class of slaves and bondsmen, whose status closely resembled that of slaves, was very numerous in Urartu. The term "slave" in Urartean etymologically meant in the first place a stranger, a prisoner of war. During Argistis I's campaigns alone, more than 280,000 slaves were captured, to which Sarduris II added some 200,000. The construction and economic projects largely depended on masses of prisoners of war, captured during numerous campaigns and raids. Thus, 6,600 prisoners taken in northern Syria were moved to Transcaucasia to build Erebuni. The use of prisoners of war varied, of course. They sometimes were included in Urartean armed forces, or given as bounty to Urartean warriors, but most of them were intended by the kings to be used as manpower in the economy. The rise and smooth functioning of the Urartean economy were largely predicated on this continual influx of fresh manpower. Harsh exploitation and complete lack of rights for the slaves were just as characteristic of Urartu as of the entire ancient Orient.

The upper stratum of Urartean society was formed by the numerous higher officials and the military. It consisted of members of the ruling dynasty, the king's numerous relatives and, presumably, at least part of the tribal nobility and descendants of the rulers of small principalities that became the nucleus of Urartu. But the stratum representing the growing military and administrative apparatus assumed an ever greater importance. The chief warlord, his assistants, and heads of the provinces, figured prominently here. Managers of royal estates were called "the holders of the seal", then there were the finance managers ("the man of money", "the man of counting"), and managers of agricultural production ("the man of sowing", "the chief herdsman").

Urartaeans' cultural achievements were also con-

siderable. Along with ancient local traditions, Urartean culture clearly shows signs of assimilation of the cultural heritage of the Hurrians and the Hittites. The Urartean language was close to Hurrian. The palace offices and the cuneiform cursive used in Urartu indicate obvious links with the Hurrian-Hittite traditions. The court culture of Urartu is marked by Assyrian influences, with characteristic glorification of the king, of the royal warriors, and strength in general. Evidence of this is found in Urartean fortresses, whose walls and towers were built of huge carefully polished stone blocks. Mighty fortresses were symbolic of the power of Urartean kings and slave-owning nobles. The entire palace culture was marked by the desire to create an impression of wealth, power and splendour. Shaped already in the early stages of the Urartean state, it reproduced the traditional norms and canons, creating the impression of stability. Characteristic of interior decoration were the frozen rhythms of recurring figures of divinities, animals, and of vegetable motifs. Only the figures of animals in the scenes of royal hunts showed signs of animation. Urartean art objects of bronze—richly decorated weapons and armour, and parts of the throne—show exquisite craftsmanship. The bronze head of a horse found during the Teishebaini excavations is striking in its dynamism and expressiveness. The traditions and canons worked out by the Urartean civilisation made a considerable impact on the culture of Transcaucasian peoples and Scythian tribes. Its best samples became part of the treasure-house of the ancient Orient and world civilisation as a whole.

In post-Urartean times, three other Transcaucasian centres—Colchis, Iberia and Albania—also went through the process of disintegration of the primitive communal structure and the formation of class society. Here, just as in the historical heir of Urartu—the ancient Armenian kingdom—a powerful impulse of the classical antique civilisation (first in its Hellenistic and later in Roman manifestation) was added to the local and ancient Oriental traditions. That general law of historical and cultural development was realised in a complex political situation marked by the formation and disintegration of new states, by military campaigns, and diplomatic alliances.

Most former Urartean possessions became part of the Median empire, and later of the empire of the

Achaemenids. They were included in several satrapies, paid taxes to the central government, and served in the Achaemenids' army. In the 6th and 5th centuries B. C., the Armenian people emerged as an ethnic entity in these satrapies, gradually absorbing the descendants of the Urartaeans and some other tribal groups. The Achaemenids widely used the local nobles in controlling the satrapies. Significantly, during the popular movements under Darius I, the government's forces in Armenia were headed by the Armenian Dadarshish and the Persian Vaumisa. Soon one of the satrapies came to be ruled by members of old Armenian nobility – Yervandids (or Orontids, in the Greek version). The sources emphasise their close links with the Achaemenid rulers; some of them point out that Yervand II was even married to a sister of the Achaemenid Artaxerxes II. The culture and everyday life of the satrap and of his retinue also followed Achaemenid models. At Yerebuni, Urartaeon edifices were rebuilt so as to form a large thirty-column hall – a local replica of the royal halls of Persepolis and Susa. Cultural and trading links were extended: during excavations of Yerebuni, Greek coins of the 5th century B. C. were found. Urartaeon temples were rebuilt to form fire temples of the Achaemenid type. Old Iranian religious concepts, and in particular Zoroastrianism, made a great impact on ancient Armenia. But the culture of the people's masses largely continued the Urartaeon traditions, being its direct heir in many respects.

Armavir, located on the site of an earlier Urartaeon centre, became the capital of Yervandid possessions sometimes called Ayrarat kingdom. Its comparatively shortlived independence ended in 220 B. C., when Antiochus III added that state to the so-called Great Armenia, which he had created in the framework of the Seleucid state. The Seleucids' crushing defeat at the hands of Rome gave separatist aspirations a chance of realisation. The independent state of Sophene was formed west of Lake Van, of which the first ruler was Zariadres (in Armenian, Zareh). Another state, officially named Armenia, arose between Lake Van and Lake Sevan. Its first king was Artases I (in Greek, Artaxias), founder of the new dynasty of the Artasesids. Artases I (189-161 B. C.) showed great concern for the cultural and economic development of his new state; during his reign, a new capital, Artaxata was built not far from Armavir.

At that time the Near East became the scene of Roman-Parthian confrontation, which determined the principal directions of the foreign and sometimes domestic policies of the states in that region. C. 95 B. C., the Parthians helped Tigranes II accede to the Artasesid throne. But Tigranes turned out to be a skilful and farsighted statesman, and he soon began to crowd the Parthians himself, adding Atropatene to his possessions. That was the beginning of the shortlived ascendancy of the old Armenian kingdom which at that time attained vast proportions. In Syria, Tigranes II established his rule over some of the former Seleucid possessions, and founded a new capital, Tigranocerta, south-west of Lake Van, in the foothills of the Armenian Taurus. The location was chosen with a view to better links with the Hellenistic Orient. The title of the "king of kings", which Tigranes II soon adopted, was a true reflection of the status of Armenia as a major world power.

But the overall situation in the Near East remained tense. Mithridates VI of Pontus made desperate efforts to unite all anti-Roman forces under his aegis. Tigranes II formed an alliance with him, but did not show much initiative. A series of military conflicts (which the Romans called Mithridatic Wars) ended in the crushing defeat and death of the energetic king of Pontus, and the Romans turned on his erstwhile ally. In 69, Tigranocerta was besieged, and in the next year the campaign against Armenia was led by Lucullus. Tigranes II had to give in before the Roman onslaught, and in 66 a peace treaty was signed with Pompey at Artaxata. The boundaries of "Great Armenia" were reduced, and the "king of kings" declared himself to be "a friend and ally of the Roman people". The successes of the Parthians, particularly the decisive victory over Crassus in 53 B. C. near Carrhae, consolidated for a while Armenian independence, but Antony's campaigns again reduced Armenia to the status of a Roman vassal. The throne passed on to Tigranes III (20-6 B. C.), brought up at Rome. He had none of the strength and independence of the other kings of that name. In some areas of the country Roman garrisons were stationed, and Tigranocerta was the centre of a pro-Roman group. With the weakening of state power, Armenia's throne became a kind of small change in the game of politics. In the 30s of the 1st century A. D., it was even held for a while by relatives of Pharasma-

nes I, king of neighbouring Iberia, who played up to Rome in the situation of Roman-Parthian confrontation.

As the Armenian state declined, some of the patriotically-minded nobles began to look forward for help to Parthia. Artaxata, the ancient Armenian capital, became the centre of this party. After various vicissitudes, Tiridates, who came from the ruling Parthian family of Arsacids, came to power in 52 or 53 A. D. Fighting for survival between the hammer and the anvil of the two powerful empires, Armenia made formal concessions to Rome, and in 66 Tiridates went there to be confirmed in his rights, as it were, by receiving the Armenian crown from Nero's hands. Artaxata was renovated with the help of Roman craftsmen, and was even called for a while Neronia. The political situation of Armenia and of the neighbouring states was complicated by a stupendous raid of the Alans, who crossed at the time the Great Caucasian Ridge. The memory of that raid has been preserved in the name of the river Daryal, from the Iranian Dar-i-alan "the Gates of the Alans": the latter followed the valley of that river in crossing the ridge. Rome's more active policy in the East affected Armenia probably more than any other state. In 114, under Trajan, Armenia was even declared to be a Roman province, if only for a short time. Numerous uprisings and Parthian pressure compelled Hadrian to withdraw the Roman garrisons, and from the second half of the 2nd century A. D. Armenia became practically independent. True, Valarsh III made a gesture of sending cavalry to serve with the Roman army, but on the whole Armenia under the Arsacids (or, in the Armenian version, Arsakuni), was politically independent. The Sassanids who replaced Parthia as the most powerful state of the region tried to draw Armenia in the orbit of their policy but were firmly resisted. Armenia, a country with ancient traditions, endeavoured to affirm its ideological independence as well; this was of the reasons for the adoption, under Tiridates III (287-330), of Christianity as a state religion, which had begun to spread through Transcaucasia since the 2nd century A. D.

The economic potential of ancient Armenia was great. Various specialised crafts, commerce, and money circulation were rather highly developed. The coins of Alexander the Great and his successors circulated here from the end of the 4th century B. C.

The country's extensive commercial links are proved by the finds at Artaxata of coins from Pontus, Phoenicia, Athens, and Nabataea. The Artasesids began minting their own coins, but there were masses of Parthian and Roman money in the markets, too, which reflected both the economic links and the political situation. Slavery was widespread. Distinctions were made between enslaved prisoners-of-war, slaves born in the household, slaves bought for silver, and enslaved debtors. Slaves worked both on royal estates and those of Armenian nobles. The ideological life in the country was strongly influenced by Zoroastrian views, whose influence went back to the Achaemenid period. The principal deity was called Armazd (Iranian Ahuramazda). The temples had custody of sacred books and kept chronicles. The culture of the court and the nobility was strongly influenced by Hellenistic views and customs. The temple at Garni, next to which stood the royal palace, was a model application of the canons of antique architecture.

These features of cultural syncretism were also characteristic of the other ancient states of Transcaucasia. In the western regions the influence of Achaemenid Iran was weaker, but the Greek states (Phasis, Dioscurias, etc.), which arose in the 6th century B. C. on the Black Sea coast mostly on the sites of ancient local settlements, played a great role. Colchis in the valley of the river Rioni was the most prominent of these; here, a local state emerged. Sharp social differentiation in Colchis is manifested by burials. In one woman's grave from the 5th century B. C. there were more than 1,600 objects of gold, including splendid diadems with figures of lions tearing a bull and a gazelle. Urban-type settlements also appeared on the mainland, far from the coast (Vani, etc.). The basis of the efflorescence of Colchis was various crafts and highly developed trade. Local craftsmen working in iron and gold were particularly skilful. Their craft did much to spread the fame of Colchis as the country of the Golden Fleece, which was so attractive to the Greek argonauts.

There are numerous references in classical literature to Colchis, at one time a very powerful and rich country. It figures in one of the most famous and widely known myths, the legend of the Argonauts seeking the Golden Fleece. This story and its characters, with which Homer was already familiar, inspired Greek and Roman writers, sculptors

and painters for centuries to come. Until recently, however, historical science had little data on Colchis, and to many it was therefore only a legendary land, the fruit of the ancient Hellenes' inexhaustible imagination. The rapid development of archaeology and regular excavations, particularly in the recent years, have gradually brought to light previously unknown chapters from the history of ancient Colchis.

Colchis reached its highest efflorescence in the 6th through the first half of the 4th centuries B. C. In describing the political situation in the Near East in the 6th century B. C., Herodotus mentioned the Colchians along with the powerful Medes and Persians.

An important branch of the country's economy was metalwork, especially iron metallurgy, for which all the necessary conditions were available—rich ore deposits in different parts of the country, abundant forests providing the necessary fuel, and finally century-old traditions of metalwork. The wide scope of iron metallurgy in Colchis is confirmed by numerous discoveries of indications of iron production (remnants of melting furnaces, production waste, clay nozzles, etc.). It is clear from archaeological evidence that in the 6th through 4th centuries B. C. iron was also processed in areas remote from iron-producing centres. Numerous finds of weapons and objects in everyday use, like hoes, axes, ploughshares, knives, sickles, swords, daggers, various blades, spearheads and arrowheads, horse tackle, etc., etc., are direct proof of the wide scope of metalwork.

Colchians continued to produce bronze implements in that period, although the production of iron and iron tools was economically much more important. Bronze cauldrons were produced in the mountainous regions of Colchis and exported to the Northern Caucasus. Bronze was also used in the production of various ornaments (such as bracelets, torques, fibulae, pendants, plates, signet rings, etc.), cultic and ritual objects, and figurines of various deities, animals and birds. Colchian silverware was also of great variety.

The specific and most original features of the Colchian artistic culture were most clearly revealed in the work of local goldsmiths, who produced an impressive array of artifacts—splendid diadems embellished with chased pictures of fighting animals; earrings and temple rings with “rays” and openwork or

hollow pendants, always profusely and delicately ornamented; massive bracelets crowned with sculptured heads of lions, calves, rams, aurox, and wild boars; magnificent necklaces with pendants in the shape of birds, calves, rams, turtles, etc. Most of them are distinguished for the originality of their form which is, as a rule, characteristic of Colchis only and genetically linked with the monuments of material culture of the preceding epoch. Particularly striking is the exceptional abundance of gold artifacts in the richer burials. It was probably these burials that brought Colchis the fame of a land rich in gold—a point repeatedly made by classical authors, who also wrote of the gold-carrying rivers of Colchis and of the method of gold extraction with the help of sheepskins, a method that survived until recent times and was described by Georgian ethnographers.

Flax and hemp were also produced for export, and, as antique geographers especially noted, the country had everything needed for shipbuilding. The trade was not local only: merchants dealt in transit trade, too, and it was believed that 70 tribes and peoples met at Dioscurias to trade. Early development of money circulation was largely due to this fact. On the coast, coins from various Greek cities were in circulation, while in the internal regions of Colchis locally minted coins predominated. On these, the ruler's bust was stamped on one side and a bull's head on the other. The minting of these local coins in the 5th through the first half of the 3rd centuries B. C. points to well-developed commodity-money relations and, in the view of some researchers, to the existence of an independent state of Colchis.

Written sources do not contain any references to the existence of a slave market in Colchis, but the fact that slaves were exported from that country seems to be beyond doubt. A Colchian slave is mentioned in an inscription compiled in Athens in 415 or 414 B. C. The vase painters and potters who worked at Athens and signed their works “Colchian” probably were also slaves.

In the 3rd through 1st centuries B. C., one of the world's trade routes linking the Orient with the West passed through Colchis and other Transcaucasian countries. That route began in India and led to the Caspian Sea, then on across Transcaucasia along the Kura, the Suram pass and the river Phasis reaching the city of Phasis on the Black Sea coast, which



was linked by sea routes with the cities of Asia Minor and other Pontic centres.

In the 3rd through 1st centuries B. C., Sinop and Rhodes were Colchis's most important trading partners. Some objects (black and red lacquered ceramics, cups with relief ornaments – the so-called Megarian cups, terracottas, toreutic objects, etc.) also came from the arts and crafts centres of Asia Minor (mostly from Pergamum, Samos, etc.).

The existence of strong links between Hellenistic countries and Colchis is confirmed by numerous finds of Hellenistic coins – gold staters of Philip II and Philip III of Macedonia, of Hiero the tyrant of Syracuse, gold staters and silver coins of Lysimachus (struck in Byzantium), Athenian “new style” tetradrachms, and coins from Pontus, Cappadocia, Parthia, Panticapaeum, Chersonese, and other regions.

In the 3rd through 1st centuries B. C., some elements of Hellenistic culture became widespread in Colchis. Thus apart from pottery characterised by purely local forms and ornamentation, Colchian (and probably newly arrived Greek) potters also made vessels of the Greek type – plates, dishes for fish, cantharus-type cups, and local imitations of red lacquered pottery. Amphoras and tiles also began to be produced locally.

Numerous finds of clay pyramidal plummets throughout Colchis point to the use of the vertical loom in weaving, a type of loom that was widely employed in the Hellenistic world.

The main trends in the cultural development of that period were most clearly revealed in architecture, in which the influences of the new, Hellenistic culture were interwoven with local building concepts founded on century-old traditions.

These trends are strikingly represented by the archaeological excavations of one of the urban centres lying in inner Colchis, some 10 km distant from the sea coast in the picturesque gorge of the river Suleri (left tributary of the Rioni, ancient Phasis), where the town of Vani now stands (the excavations were conducted by Georgian archaeologists headed by Prof. Lordkipanidze).

In the 3rd-1st centuries B. C. the ancient city was situated on a triangular hill divided into three terraces. Mighty defensive walls of stone and mudbrick, buttressed by towers and counterforts that housed stone-throwing machines, have already been excavated. A number of architectural monuments point

to the existence of a local school of architects familiar with the basic principles of Hellenistic architecture which were creatively applied to the local conditions. Of the greatest interest is the gateway complex built in the 3th century B. C. of well-dressed snow-white blocks of stone joined without mortar. Near the entrance, the pedestal survives of a statue of the divine protectress which, unfortunately, has not been preserved. A shallow vertical groove in a side wall marks the place where an iron grate or portcullis was lowered to bar the entrance in moments of danger. Farther in, arclike scratches in the stone threshold can be seen, left by the closing and opening of wooden gates covered with iron bars. A small pagan temple with a stone altar was built next to the gateway. Twenty-three vessels, two of them filled with millet, which must have been donated to the temple, have been found in it. An 18-metre-long stretch of road of small cobbles, in an excellent state of preservation, leads to the temple. The gateway is flanked by a semi-circular tower.

Inside the city, several monumental public buildings, shrines, a stepped altar, a round temple, and other structures, have been laid bare. The excavations have yielded extremely numerous and varied monuments of ancient Colchian culture and of Hellenistic art. The latter include a bronze ritual vessel, once magnificent in appearance, from the 2nd century B. C. This vessel was ornamented with three figurines of eagles with outstretched wings and six heads in high relief (10 to 12 cm in height) of the divine companions of Dionysus, the god of wine-making – of bearded Pan, young Satyr, Ariadne, and the beautiful Menads, all executed with great artistic skill in the so-called Pergamum style. The vessel is crowned with an 18-centimetre-high figurine of Nike, the winged goddess of Victory, coming down from heaven in headlong flight. The anonymous Greek author brilliantly expressed swift movement: the folds of the tunic fly open revealing a divine leg impetuously striding forward.

Of great scientific significance for the history of Colchian art are the finds of three massive lion heads (40 cm high and 70 cm long) from the 3rd or 2nd centuries B. C. carved from a local white limestone. From the artistic point of view they bear traces of Greek influence, but there is at the same time a distinct imprint of the local traditions going back, it would appear, to Late Hittite times.

The absence of residential quarters on the territory of the city, or of cultural strata characteristic of urban settlements of the ordinary secular type, on the one hand, and the abundance of temples and other cultic edifices, on the other, warrant the assumption that it was a temple centre, a shrine city. There are grounds to believe that it is the temple city to which the Greek geographer Strabo refers in his description of Colchis and the story of the plunder of a rich shrine of the goddess Leucothea by Pharnaces, ruler of Bosphorus (c. 49 B. C.), and later by Mithridates VII of Pergamum (in 47 B. C.).

The excavations revealed evidence of the city being destroyed twice in rapid succession. The first sack occurred on a spring day when the people celebrated a religious festival in honour of the god of vineyards and wine-making. This is confirmed by the discovery near the city gate of a terracotta mask of Dionysus, which originally hung on a wooden post, and of numerous ritual clay pots. It was then that the city gates were destroyed, as well as the shrine with a mosaic floor, a stepped altar, and the round temple on the central terrace. Traces of a big fire and ruthless plunder – walls razed to the ground, stones red with the heat of the fire, burnt tiles and mudbricks, charred timbers – are found everywhere. The destruction of that city was the last page in the history of ancient Colchis.

Gold coins have been found dating from the 3rd century B. C. in the name of the local king Akku. Administratively, Colchis was divided into several provinces headed by persons that bore the title of *skeptouch* (“sceptre-bearer”). These may have been descendants of the local tribal chieftains incorporated in the administrative system of the newly formed state. The most remarkable feature of ancient Colchis was the interaction between the local and the Greek cultures. Greek craftsmen from Sinope, Heraclea and other centres worked at the coastal cities, and probably at Vani as well. During excavations at Vani, many Greek amphoras and other imported wares were discovered. In the earliest times, the local community and the Greek colonists existed side by side. In the coastal city of Pichvnary there were two distinct cemeteries in the 5th century B. C., one Greek, one Colchian, but in the 4th and 3rd centuries there was only one necropolis here, in which the graves of the descendants of Greek colonists and of the locals were alike.

Eventually, Colchis came into the sphere of Roman influence, as it extended eastward. Included in the possessions of Mithridates VI of Pontus, it became directly dependent on Rome after the defeat and death of that fierce enemy of the Romans. In 63 B. C., Pompey appointed a certain Aristarchus of Colchis, who minted his own coin, “king of the Colchians”. In the 1st century A. D., the coastal areas, designated as Pontus of Polemon, formed a Roman province. Colchis was soon included in the Roman province of Cappadocia, and Flavius Arrianus, the legate of the emperor Hadrian, left an interesting description of the Black Sea countries. An inscription mentioning Arrianus was found at Dioskurias.

A certain decline was observed in the local culture at this time. New tribes apparently came on the scene. The Colchians are no longer mentioned, but the Laz and the Abasg are. These were most likely the ancestors of the modern Abkhaz. Western Georgia was called Lazica in antique sources from the 3rd–4th centuries A. D., although the local population called their country Egrisi. Its capital was Tsi-khe-Godzhi (the Archeopolis of the Greeks). In the 4th century A. D., the spreading of Christianity began in what is now Georgia.

In eastern Georgia, just as in neighbouring Colchis, noblemen evolved into a special class in the 6th–4th centuries B. C. (rich burials at Akhalgoreti, Algeti, Kachaeti), and city centres arose. Of these, the most important was Mtskheta, called “the mother city” in Georgian chronicles. Tribal consolidation and the formation of the state progressed very rapidly. According to the tradition of the chronicles, these processes were complete when Prince Azo moved to Mtskheta and brought the tribal shrines there. Soon, Pharnabases supported by the Colchians, defeated Azo, declared himself king of Iberia, and built Armazis-Tsikhe on the bank of the Kura opposite Mtskheta. Later the two centres were surrounded by a common wall, and Armazis became in fact the citadel of the Iberian capital Mtskheta.

In the second century B. C., some Iberian districts were included in the Armenian empire of Tigranes, and Iberia as a whole came under Armenian influence. Iberia was then ruled by King Artok, believed to be an ally of Tigranes and Mithridates VI. Roman expansion of the 1st century B. C. did not bypass Iberia. Pompey invaded the country, cap-

tured Armazis, and the Iberians were declared "friends and allies of the Roman people". This vassalage was largely formal, for soon afterwards Antony's general Candius Crassus had to set out on a second campaign against Iberia's king Pharnabases. Romans did not interfere much in Iberia's internal affairs, while Iberian rulers endeavoured to use the constant shifts in the balance of power in the Roman-Parthian confrontation to their advantage. King Pharasmanes I the Courageous, who ruled Iberia in the 30s of the 1st century A.D., was particularly successful in this type of diplomacy. He even enthroned in Armenia some members of his family, if only for a short time. In A.D. 75, on orders from emperor Vespasian, a wall was built for the protection of the valley of the Kura from the raids of warlike mountain tribes and northern nomads. Iberians took part in Trajan's Parthian campaign of 114-117, and when the Iberian prince Amazasp died in that war, a tomb was erected for him in Rome, bearing an inscription in Greek. When Hadrian gave up all active military policy in the east, the Iberian king Pharasmanes II, endeavouring to enlist continued Roman support, went to Rome with his whole family and retinue. That diplomatic move was a complete success. Pharasmanes II was allowed to make a sacrifice on the Capitoline Hill, and his equestrian statue was erected in the Field of Mars. There were certain more mundane results, too: added possessions, a detachment of 500 warriors, and a battle elephant—a gift from the Roman emperor. An inscription at Mtskheta has preserved the name of Pharasmanes's successor, Ksefarnug.

Class distinctions were well-developed in Iberia. The antique geographer Strabo reports the existence of four principal social groups there. Kings, supreme judges and warlords were elected from the first group; the second group was made up of priests; the third, of warriors and farmers; and the fourth, of the common people called "king's slaves", who did all the work of providing the others' upkeep. The legal status of these bondsmen undoubtedly varied greatly, but just as undoubted is the existence of real slaves among them. According to the tradition of the chronicles, the king appointed provincial governors (*eristavi*) and higher officials. Rich tombs of the nobility have been excavated at Samtavro; they were built of stone blocks or baked brick and roofed with tiles. The tomb inscriptions give the administrative

posts of the dead—chief of the royal court, head architect and artist, and "warlord of the great king of the Iberians".

Iberian urban culture was highly developed. Many edifices had tiled roofs, there were market-places, temples and palaces in the cities. Armaz, the moon-god, was the supreme deity. His statue is described as a figure of an awesome warrior in splendid armour, a sword in his hand. The influence of antique culture was great in many spheres: household utensils, ornaments, coiffures, and even names followed Roman fashions. In some cases these borrowings merged with local traditions. Thus the popularity of the Dionysus cult in Iberia is largely explained by the existence of ancient local fertility cults, which now took new forms. A temple and palace complex from the 2nd century A.D. has been excavated at the Dzalis site, where a floor mosaic pictured Dionysus and Ariadne sitting on a throne. The builder's inscription reads: "Remember Priske who did it." An important achievement of the Iberian culture was the development of an original script suited to the local language.

Consolidation of tribal groups into a state structure also went on in the south-western Caspian seaboard areas that were called Albania. The sources say that in antiquity the country was inhabited by 26 tribes, each with its own language (presumably a dialect) and king, but then it was united under one ruler. When Roman expansion reached Albania in the mid-1st century B.C., it was ruled by king Orois or Oroz. The name of a later Albanian king was Zober. Albania, just as Iberia and, at certain times, Armenia, recognised for a while Roman supremacy. It was proclaimed that its kings were "under the protection of Roman greatness". A Roman inscription in the mountains of Gobustan not far from Baku, left in the name of a centurion of the Twelfth Legion, dates from the 1st century A.D. In the second half of the 2nd century Roman influence began to wane, and an Arsacid dynasty became entrenched on the throne of the Albanian province, called Caspiana. Written sources speak of the fertility of Albanian lands and of well-developed cattle-breeding. Urban centres also existed here; the best-known was the capital, Kabala (Kabalaki). The minting of local coin similar to Alexander the Great's drachmas points to the development of trade and money circulation. The Albanians' armed forces

were highly spoken of. Thus they sent 22,000 horse and 60,000 foot against Pompey. Priests played a significant role in society. The supreme priest is described as a person respected more than anyone else except for the king. He ruled "a large and densely populated sacred area, and was also in charge of the temple's slaves". It must have been a temple's estate similar to those known from Armenia and Asia Minor. Hellenistic influences on the local culture were less pronounced than in Armenia or Iberia. A few buildings at Kabala were tiled-roofed, and bullas with imprints of cameos, both Hellenistic (e. g., Heracles's figure) and local (figures of a horseman and of various animals) have been found. Orna-

ments and toilet articles were imported from various provinces of the Roman empire.

The originality of the culture of each country of ancient Transcaucasia determined their contribution to the overall development and progress. On the whole, Transcaucasia in the ancient epoch was a highly developed area of the ancient Orient, with an original culture. The heritage of the ancient peoples lived on for many centuries. The achievements of Transcaucasian civilisation made a considerable impact on the other regions of the ancient East and on the world of classical antiquity. The medieval culture of the Transcaucasian peoples relied on the traditions of the ancient epoch.

## Chapter 6

### *Scythians and Their Culture*

The tribes inhabiting the Eurasian steppes in the 1st millennium B. C., Scythian tribes above all, played a considerable role in the political and cultural history of the ancient civilisations of East and West.

*Scythians.* The name of that people, which inhabited the northern Black Sea areas, is familiar from Near Eastern sources but mostly from the works of Greek and Roman authors. Herodotus, who visited Scythia in the 5th century B. C., asserted that the name "Skuthēs" was used with reference to a member of that people only among the Greeks, whereas the people itself used the term "Scoloti". Modern linguists believe, however, that this view does not reflect the true situation, and that "Scythians" and "Scoloti" are merely two dialect forms of the same name; the differences between them are explained by the specific phonetic traits of the dialects of Black Sea Scythians and the manner of conveying the sounds of a foreign language in the Greek language and alphabet.

Since antiquity, the term Scythae "Scythians" has been used in a different meaning as well: apart from the concrete people of the northern Black Sea area, classical authors often used that term to refer to all the inhabitants of the extensive steppe belt stretching from the Danube to the Yenisei, and also of some forest-steppe and mountainous regions. There were considerable similarities between the modes of life of the tribes inhabiting that territory, and, although the Greeks knew the names of many of these tribes (Sauromatae, Issedones, Massagetae, etc.), they called them all Scythae, using the name of the people they knew best.

Since none of the peoples of the Eurasian steppes had a system of writing in ancient times, the scholars of the modern times endeavouring to reconstruct their history and culture relied at first on the antique tradition and, accepting the broad meaning of the term Scythae, regarded all the inhabitants of that region as a single people. As archaeology developed, materials found during excavations were used more and more extensively in the study of the culture of these tribes. These materials, however, also tended at first to confirm the view of the ethnic unity of the steppe belt's population, as they pointed to cultural similarities between its various parts: everywhere, archaeologists found burials under kurgans or mounds, and in the tombs were largely similar weapons, bits of horse harness, and works of art in "animal style", as it was called. That was the source of the concept of a single Scythian culture embracing all the Eurasian steppes in the 1st millennium B. C.

Further accumulation and interpretation of archaeological materials showed clearly, however, that that concept was simplistic. Despite definite similarities, the steppe monuments discovered by the archaeologists belonged to different peoples. Each separate area had a characteristic type of burial structures, different funeral rites, and specific, if largely similar, forms of weapons and motives of pictorial art. Some of these peoples were apparently related, in other cases the cultural similarities were due to the largely identical economy, mode of life and lively contacts, established all the more easily as all these peoples were nomads. It is not often that the sources permit to ascertain the real ancient name of each of these peoples; for this reason they mostly

appear in modern scholarly literature under conventional archaeological appellations. Thus tribes of the so-called Tasmolian culture inhabited Central Kazakhstan; the bearers of the so-called Pazyryk culture, the Altai Mountains; of the Tagar culture, the Minusinsk plain, etc. In our view, the entire range of these peoples had better be called by the conventional term the "Scythian (Scythic) world", while the term "Scythians" ("Scyths") should be used in its concrete historical meaning as the name of the tribes of the northern Black Sea areas in the second and third quarters of the 1st millennium B. C.

*The Study of Scythian Antiquities.* Interest for Scythian antiquities arose already at the end of the 18th century, when peasants digging in the so-called Litoi Kurgan in the Ukraine, near the modern town of Kirovograd, discovered remarkable objects of gold – parts of the ceremonial raiment of an ancient chieftain. Excavations of some of the Scythian mounds were later undertaken from time to time by laymen; in the second half of the 19th century and the early 20th, systematic professional studies were made of a number of mounds, mostly the largest ones, containing rich burials of Scythian noblemen. As a result, considerable archaeological materials have been accumulated pertaining to the various aspects of Scythian culture or, to be more precise, to the culture of the upper stratum of Scythian society. The data on the life of ordinary Scythians, as well as on the peoples of the easterly regions of the steppe belt, remained extremely scarce. During the past few decades, however, planned research by Soviet archaeologists has largely filled this gap. The number of excavated mounds has increased manyfold, and several previously completely unknown archaeological cultures have been studied in the eastern regions of the steppe belt. Burials of rich men as well as of ordinary commoners were excavated, providing materials on many aspects of the life of the tribes that once lived there. Particularly effective are results of archaeological excavations which can be compared with written evidence. But the evidence that we have mostly pertains to the tribes of the European part of the steppe belt that lived in close proximity to the Greek colonies which arose on the Black Sea coast in the 7th-5th centuries B.C. and

kept up close contacts with them. The farther east from these colonies, the more scarce and fragmentary and less reliable are the data of the antique tradition about the peoples of these regions. This seriously affects the range of our knowledge about the various peoples of the Scythian world.

*The Language and the Origin of the Scythians.* This disproportion in our knowledge makes itself felt in the study of the ethnolinguistic characteristics of the peoples of the Scythian world. In the absence of authentic texts, these characteristics can only be established from the personal names, toponyms and ethnonyms preserved in monuments in other languages. These names are rather abundantly represented in the works of antique authors and Greek inscriptions found during excavations of antique colonies. From these data, linguists were able to firmly identify the Scythian language as belonging to the Iranian group of the Indo-European family of languages. This conclusion, throwing light on the problem of Scythian origin, is in itself of considerable value, but it also has great significance for the interpretation of many features of Scythian culture. Indeed, much of it is traceable to the remote epoch when all the Iranian (and related Indo-Aryan) peoples inhabited a common proto-homeland and had a single culture; therefore the scant information about Scythians preserved by the antique tradition, which in itself often defies unambiguous interpretation, can sometimes be explained from comparison with the more comprehensive data on other Indo-Iranian peoples. For example, this method was used to provide convincing explanation of certain traits of the Scythians' social organisation, their mythology, religion, etc. Applying this method, scholars have reconstructed the meaning of many Scythian stems through comparison with the words of other Indo-Iranian languages. Thus V. I. Abayev, the well-known Soviet linguist, compiled a dictionary of Scythian stems including some 200 words and providing essential information on some aspects of Scythian culture.

The ethnolinguistic membership of the other peoples living in the steppe belt in the Scythian epoch is more hypothetical, but some data about them are nonetheless available. Thus the Sauromatae, the Scythians' eastern neighbours, according to Hero-



dotus, have been the offspring of marriages between Scythian youths and the Amazons, and have spoken the Scythian language, though distorted already in ancient times. In other words, the language of the Sauromatae may apparently be regarded as a dialect of the same family of languages.

Antique sources also speak of the Sarmatae, who originally lived somewhere east of Scythia but later, as their numbers swelled and military might increased, swamped the Black Sea regions and routed the Scythians, putting an end to the latter's supremacy in this area. The question is still unresolved whether the Sarmatae were descendants of the Sauromatae or a distinct people, but the onomastic materials preserved by Greek and Latin sources show that the two languages belonged to the same group.

Some other peoples of the Scythian world also undoubtedly spoke languages of the Iranian group, as shown by some of their surviving names, but it is unfortunately not always possible to establish in which particular areas of Eurasia the peoples that went by those names lived and what particular archaeological monuments belonged to them.

Herodotus discusses the origin of the Scythians in greater detail than any of the ancient authors. He reports that they came to the northern Black Sea region from Asia, ousting the Cimmerians that had lived there. This report is echoed by another Greek historian, Diodorus, who says that originally the Scythians, weak and few in number, lived on the Araxes, but later they grew stronger and conquered the Northern Caucasus and the whole of the north coast of the Black Sea. Unfortunately it is not clear which particular river Diodorus calls the Araxes, as antique authors used that name for different rivers; opinions therefore differ sharply on the location of the Scythians' homeland. Sometimes it is placed, on Herodotus's evidence, too far to the east—say, in Central Asia. If one bears in mind that the ancient geographers regarded the Tanais (modern Don) as the boundary between Europe and Asia, that hypothesis appears to have little foundation. The Scythians' homeland, most likely, did not lie further east than the Volga basin (could the Volga be the ancient Araxes?) or the Ural basin at most. Incidentally, this assumption is in better agreement with modern linguistic data on the original habitation of the Iranian-speaking peoples.

Herodotus's view that all the Cimmerians were driven from their land and the Scythians occupied an already deserted region is not borne out by archaeological data either. Much of the Scythian culture shows direct continuity with the culture of the inhabitants of the northern Black Sea area of the previous epoch. Accordingly, the Scythians which were observed in these parts by the antique authors of the 6th-4th centuries B. C., and which left behind the Scythian monuments studied by the archaeologists, arose in fact from the mixing of the Cimmerians and of some tribes invading from the east, tribes that were presumably not very numerous, and that were originally called Scythae or Scoloti. It is not excluded that these Scythians were direct ancestors of those Scythians whom Herodotus, in the 5th century B. C., knew as "royal Scythians" and whom he described as dominating all the other Scythians, regarded by them as slaves. In other words, it may be assumed that the ethnic and political structure of the Scythian tribal union took shape in the course of the subjugation of the original Cimmerian population by the invaders advancing from the east and related to the Cimmerians in language and culture.

*Scythians in the Near East.* According to Herodotus's account, the Cimmerians, ousted from the Black Sea coast by the Scythians, went south, across the Caucasian Mountains, pursued by the Scythians. This account is based on real events, as the arrival of both these peoples in the Near East was also recorded by ancient Oriental sources. However, it was not, apparently, a one-act invasion but a gradual advance of the steppe tribes, wave following wave, into the countries of the ancient East. Cuneiform texts mention the Cimmerians in this region as early as the end of the 8th century B. C., and in the early 7th century B. C., the presence of the Scythians is also recorded here. During the 7th century B. C., both the Cimmerians and the Scythians took an active part in the political life in the Near East, interfering in the conflicts between various states, supporting some of them and attacking others. Thus the sources report the taking of Sardis, the capital of the Lydian kingdom in Asia Minor, by the Cimmerians, the Scythians' alliance with the Assyrians in the war against Media, their raids as far as Egypt, etc. Later,

after several defeats, the Scythians left the Near East and returned to the Black Sea coast.

That marked the beginning of some four hundred years of their ascendancy in this area. The Scythians' experiences in the Middle East and their acquaintanceship with the Middle Eastern civilisation left a marked imprint on Scythian culture. That influence was especially tangible in the early Scythian complexes (of the late 7th and early 6th centuries B.C.), like the Kelermes kurgans in the Kuban region and the already mentioned Litoi Kurgan.

These rich burials also point to the emergence of a military aristocracy in Scythian society, of chieftains of tribes and tribal unions whose power was regarded as a "divine institution". The richness of the chieftain's attributes and the ornamental designs on these attributes, with pictures of mythological nature, were intended to prove the idea of divine origin.

In Cimmerian times, the inhabitants of the northern Black Sea regions knew no pictorial art; nothing but simple geometrical designs were used to ornament everyday or ritual utensils. When the social development of Scythian society demanded an "artistic language" that could express the idea of the sacral character of the royal power through religious and mythological themes and concepts, images borrowed from the ancient Oriental art were used for that purpose. These images, however, were re-interpreted in the spirit of Scythian notions and were treated as figures of characters from Scythian mythology. The kurgans mentioned above contained, among other pieces of ceremonial military equipment, swords with gold-inlaid hilts and sheaths, and a halberd, also gold-ornamented, with pictures typical of Assyrian-Urartean art. The ancient Oriental elements were also strong in the pictorial traditions of other early Scythian tribes.

Not all of the pictorial motifs borrowed by the Scythians proved suitable for the expression of their mythological concepts. Most of them disappeared from Scythian art, although others became firmly fixed in it and were reproduced by Scythian craftsmen for centuries.

Highly popular in Scythian art were animal figures, which formed the basis of the famous Scythian animal style—the most interesting and original element of Scythian culture. The problem of the origin of this style is the subject of lively debate among scholars. Characteristic of that art is a definite set of

images, mostly of hooved animals, above all the deer, as well as feline predators and birds, in several canonic postures. These motifs were mostly used for ornamenting military equipment, equestrian harness, and ritual vessels. All these figures were clearly endowed with certain content, very important in the Scythians' eyes, but the question of the semantics of the animal style is still acutely debated.

Some researchers hold the view that the basis of their semantics is magical concepts—the idea that possession of these figures spelt possession of the qualities of the animals by the owner. Others link up these images with Scythian mythology, implying that that was the way in which the Scythians pictured their gods, and that their religious and mythological concepts did not rise above that fairly primitive level. The view has also been expressed that the gods of Scythian mythology could be conceived as beings capable of assuming various guises (a conception characteristic of several other Iranian peoples), or that the zoomorphic motifs were not images but symbols of Scythian gods and of the elements of the universe they personified.

However that may be, the animal style monuments with their characteristic laconicism and expressiveness of the artistic devices are undoubtedly the Scythians' most valuable contribution to the treasure-house of world art. Some of the works of Scythian craftsmen now in the possession of the museums of the USSR, such as the gold figures of a deer (from a kurgan near the Cossack village of Kostromskaya) or a panther (from the Kelermes kurgan in the Kuban region), which once embellished the shields of Scythian chieftains, numerous bronze pole-tops, etc., are world famous.

*Scythian Society.* The Scythian tribal confederation included both nomadic and settled agricultural tribes. The former had by far the greater power and might, and the Scythian kings came from their number. The nomads from the "royal Scythian" tribe imposed tribute on the rest of the population, and their nobles thus accumulated great wealth. The Scythians must have also had professional priests. Thus Herodotus speaks of soothsayers who divined the future by performing certain manipulations with bunches of willow twigs. Similar practices existed among other Iranian-speaking peoples.

The elements of Scythian mythology, as reconstructed by scholars, indicate that Scythian society was from the start divided into three main estates, in accordance with the tradition common to all the Indo-Europeans: military aristocracy, including the Scythian kings, the priests, and the commoners—farmers and cattle-breeders. The tradition derives this division from the three sons of Targitaius, the mythological forefather of the Scythians. Each estate had a corresponding sacred attribute—one of the gold objects which one day, according to the Scythian myth, fell from heaven; the warriors' symbol was the bow; the priests', the cup; and the commoners', the plough and the yoke. The dominant position of the military is reflected in the records concerning Scythians in the antique authors, who focus mostly on the military customs. Slave labour must have played an increasing role in the Scythian economy, but the data of the sources on this point are meagre.

*Scythian Kurgans.* Archaeological materials greatly help to verify the data of the written tradition on the Scythians' social organisation. The preponderance of nomadic elements in Scythian economy determined the nature of the monuments they left behind. These were mostly burial kurgans—the artificial barrows raised over the tombs, sometimes with a ring of undressed stone blocks round them. Scythian kurgans greatly varied in size. Small mounds were piled on top of the burials of ordinary commoners, which now, after many centuries of erosion and ploughing, hardly rise above the level of the surrounding land. By contrast, giant barrows were raised over the tombs of tribal chieftains and kings; thus, Chertomlyk, one of the best-known Scythian mounds, was more than 19 metres high and 330 metres round at the base before the excavation; another royal kurgan, the Alexandropol one, was more than 21 metres high.

It was these giant barrows that first attracted the archaeologists' attention, and many of them were excavated as early as the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. These excavations yielded spectacular finds of unique art objects, but they could not provide the necessary information on the economy and culture of Scythian society as a whole. In recent decades Soviet archaeologists have paid considerable attention to the study of ordinary

Scythians' burials. Hundreds of such mounds have been studied, and exceptionally valuable new materials obtained.

The main type of Scythian burials is the so-called catacomb—a cave of a simple or more intricate configuration dug in one of the sides of a deep—sometimes several metres deep—shaft. Sometimes—especially in the burials of noble personages—the chamber was connected with the shaft by a rather long passage, and there could also be several chambers leading off the entrance shaft.

The objects meant to accompany the dead person were placed in the chamber or, sometimes, in the entrance shaft. In noblemen's tombs, the bodies of servants buried together with the ruler—armour-bearers, grooms, etc.—were often placed here. Sometimes, however, additional graves were dug for the secondary burials and also for the dead man's riding horses.

The burial rites of a Scythian king were attended by all his subjects, and it was they who built the giant barrow over his tomb. They also took part in the funeral feast, traces of which are often found during excavations. Thus the ditch that once surrounded the Tolstaya Mogila kurgan, recently excavated by Ukrainian archaeologists, contained the bones of domestic and wild animals (horses, deer, wild boar) whose quantity indicates that between two and a half and three thousand people took part in the rite. Burials of ordinary Scythians were not as magnificent as these—only the closest relatives took part in them. The assemblage of objects in Scythian kurgans is usually defined by tradition, although it is immeasurably richer in the noblemen's kurgans than in the tombs of ordinary Scythians. It is these grave goods that form the main source for the reconstruction of Scythian culture. The most typical element of men's burials were weapons. Herodotus's observation that each Scythian is a mounted archer is borne out by archaeology: bronze arrowheads are the most common type of find in Scythian burials. In Scythia, just as in the other parts of the steppe belt, three-edged arrowheads were the most widespread, relatively small but of great piercing capacity. The strength of the Scythian bow also assured the effectiveness of these weapons. Details of bows are sometimes found during excavations, but because of the nondurable nature of the materials of which the Scythian bows were made (wood, bone plates), these

finds give no real clue to its form and structure. These are better known from pictures on Scythian and Greek monuments.

Antique authors often likened the Black Sea with the shape of the Scythian bow; the straight line of the southern coast corresponded to the bowstring, and the northern coast, to the bow itself with a curve at the point where the archer held it. The strength of the Scythian bow and the skill needed to bend it can be judged from Herodotus's story about the three sons of the Scythians' forefather, who had to fix the string to the bow as a test in choosing the most worthy claimant to the Scythian throne. Bow and arrows were worn at the belt, in a *gorytos* or combined bow-case and quiver. The effectiveness of the Scythian bow and arrows made this weapon widespread throughout the ancient world. Arrowheads of the Scythian type are found far beyond the area of settlement of the Scythians themselves. The Scythians also invented the art of shooting the bow at full gallop, both ahead and back (later known as "the Parthian shot").

Spears and short swords (*akinakēs*) were also used by Scythians, but the latter are mostly found in noblemen's burials, not the ordinary warriors'.

The typical finds in women's graves are simple personal ornaments and toilet articles—earrings, finger-rings, bracelets, and looking-glasses.

The objects found in noblemen's graves are much more varied and precious than those of the commoners' tombs, although the categories are the same. The *akinakēs* scabbards and bow-cases were often ornamented with gold plates bearing ritual and mythological pictures. The ritual women's headdresses were also richly embellished with gold plates. The clothes of noble Scythians and the hangings on the walls of burial chambers were often covered with small gold plates with pictures on them. All these objects are of special importance since they reflect the Scythians' notions of the power of chieftains as a "divine institution": its sacral nature was confirmed by the numerous mythological motifs in the ornamentation.

In some of the richer Scythian barrows remnants of funeral cars were found, in which the dead Scythian king was taken through the territories of the tribes over which he ruled. The carcasses of horses, whose gear was sometimes richly adorned, were also placed in the tomb together with the car.

*Beliefs and Rituals.* No information can be gleaned from archaeological data about any Scythian constructions other than the burial mounds, because no such constructions have survived, but the written sources describe some of them. Herodotus speaks of gigantic altars made of fagots set up in the centre of each of the Scythian kingdom's parts, where regular sacrifices were made to the god of war. The symbol of that deity was an ancient iron sword fixed at the top of such an altar, sprinkled with the blood of sacrificed prisoners. The huge bronze cauldron in the Exampaeus locality (between the Dnieper and the Southern Bug) seems to have been an all-Scythian sacred object. According to ancient Greek sources, that cauldron was cast from the bronze arrowheads brought to that locality, one for each warrior, at the bidding of the Scythian king Ariantas, who thus learnt the number of his subjects. The cauldron has not been preserved, of course, but we can judge of its form (though not the size, certainly) by the numerous bronze cauldrons frequently found in Scythian burials. The meat of sacrificial animals during the ritual feasts was cooked in such cauldrons.

The horse was the principal type of the sacrificial animal, as well as the main domestic animal bred in Scythia. That is confirmed both by archaeological data and Herodotus's story, who described in detail the Scythian sacrificial ritual. Binding first the horse's forelegs, the Scythians pulled him down on the ground and strangled him with a noose thrown round the neck, which they pulled tight by turning a stick. That mode of sacrifice is pictured on the famous silver vase from Chertomlyk. The meat of the sacrificial animal was then cooked in the cauldron, and the man bringing the offering threw it down on the ground as a gift to the god.

In this way sacrifices to all the principal gods of Scythia were made. There were seven of them; the number is also characteristic of the pantheons of other Indo-Iranian peoples. The supreme goddess worshipped by the Scythians was Tabiti, the goddess of fire, which all Indo-Iranians held particularly sacred: fire was the element underlying the universe, and its purifying principle. Tabiti was followed in the religious and mythological hierarchy of the Scythians by a husband-and-wife couple, the divinities of heaven and earth Papaeus and Api, the ancestors, as it were, of the Scythian kings, the whole

Scythian people, and even the whole corporeal world. Scythian social and political organisation, and order in the whole world, were traced back by the Scythian tradition to various descendants of that couple.

We know much less of the four deities of the "third rank", but, according to Herodotus, they were rather similar to the Greek gods, such as Heracles, apparently identical with Targitaus, the first man of the Scythian mythology; Aphrodite Urania, whose Scythian replica was Argimpasa, a female deity worshipped by the Scythians as the symbol of the generative powers of nature; Apollo, called Oetosyrus in Scythia; and finally Ares, a deity whose Scythian name we do not know – but we do know that monumental altars were erected to him in all parts of Scythia for making sacrifices, including human ones; he appears to have been the god of war, worshipped in the shape of an *akinakēs* sword.

*The Scythians' War with Darius.* Our knowledge of the political history of Scythia is extremely fragmentary, but the antique tradition has preserved interesting information about one of its most important chapters, the war with Achaemenid Iran, whose forces invaded the Pontic region. A fairly detailed account of the course of that war in Herodotus apparently goes back to a Scythian epic narrative, which presumably relates the story of the war's main events with some truth, despite the usual folklore hyperbole.

According to that story, Darius crossed the Danube and for two months pursued the Scythian army which retreated without a major battle. The Persian king's attempt to press the Scythians into a decisive battle was unsuccessful. The Scythian chieftains explained their refusal to accept the challenge by the fact that they had no cities or cultivated lands that they would have had to defend and so saw no reason for engaging in battles – they simply continued their normal life, wandering across the steppes. Still, Scythians constantly kept Darius's army in a state of tension, inflicting severe losses on it through sudden attacks. As a result, the Persian army, having crossed the whole of Scythia and some neighbouring lands, had to leave its territory with great losses.

Apart from the information it provides on the

course of the Scythian-Persian war, this story is important in that it warrants the assumption that the Scythians had a well-developed narrative folklore, unfortunately lost to us without a trace.

Of some interest is the information this piece offers on the organisation of the Scythian army and of the Scythian kingdom itself, which was ruled by three kings or warlords from the tribe of the royal Scythians. The Scythian myth recorded by Herodotus also speaks of the origin of that structure. Later that structure ceased to satisfy the level of the development of Scythian society and was replaced by the rule of one king.

*King Atheas's Empire.* One of the most powerful rulers of the centralised Scythian kingdom was, according to the antique tradition, king Atheas whose reign falls on the middle of the 4th century B. C. Judging by the archaeological data, that period should be regarded as an important landmark in the history of Scythian might. It is at this period that the first Scythian city achieved eminence; that city stood at the so-called Settlement Kamenskoye on the lower Dnieper and was the economic and politico-administrative centre of the Scythian kingdom. Soviet archaeologists have studied here craftsmen's streets and the fortified "acropolis" – the citadel which must have been the residence of the Scythian kings (regrettably, only insignificant remnants of the "acropolis" have been preserved).

Aspiring to appear a sovereign ruler of a great state in the eyes of the neighbours, King Atheas even tried to mint his own coin, which also served as the symbol of the state. Accordingly, the coins had stamped on them the figure of a mounted Scythian warrior and the head of Heracles who, as has been mentioned, was identified with the mythical ancestor of Scythian kings. Most of the rich (the so-called "royal") Scythian kurgans belong to this time as well. The tombs of Scythian kings were, according to Herodotus, in the locality of Gerrhus somewhere in the outlying regions of Scythia, but its precise location has not so far been established, probably because there are few rich Scythian barrows from the early epoch (6th-5th centuries B. C.). They are very numerous, though, during the second half of the 4th and early 3rd centuries. Almost all of them are concentrated in a small area on both banks of the

lower Dnieper. Situated here are the better known vast mounds like the Chertomlyk and Alexandropol kurgans we mentioned above, the Solokha kurgan, only slightly smaller than the other two, as well as more modest kurgans which nonetheless contain just as rich burials as the former (e. g., the Tolstaya Mogila kurgan). The Scythian culture as it appears in the light of the materials from these kurgans is largely continuous with the earlier epoch, but it is at the same time essentially different from it. The difference mostly lies in the influence of the antique world on it.

*Graeco-Scythian Art.* The close commercial and economic links with the Greek cities of the northern Pontic coast and the ancient Greek world as a whole played an important role in the life of Scythia since very ancient times. The trade was extremely advantageous for both the Greeks and the Scythians. Scythia provided Greece with the agricultural products it needed (above all, with grain), as well as with slaves and raw materials; moreover it presented a very large market for objects of Greek art and craftsmanship. Scythian nobles accumulated considerable riches through that trade, and they spent their wealth on luxury goods. Local Scythian craftsmen could not compete with Greek artists in the making of such objects. At the same time the Greek craftsmen, eager to consolidate their positions in this profitable market, did not just export their products to Scythia—they tried to take into account the tastes and demands of the Scythian nobles; thus they made articles especially intended for sale in Scythia.

This resulted in the formation of a distinctive Graeco-Scythian art, whose numerous objects are found in rich Scythian mounds. Stylistically, these works are part of the antique artistic culture and an embodiment of its highest achievements—dynamism, plasticity, truth and vitality in portraying the human or animal body. But in content, the pictures adorning these objects were linked with the concepts inherent in the Scythian worldview, since the objects themselves were of ritual significance and were intended to express the Scythians' religious and mythological concepts. Scholars therefore regard them as a most valuable source for reconstructing Scythian concepts and traditions.

In the initial stages, the "repertory" of Graeco-

Scythian art was mostly limited to animal figures and was thus close to the animal style of the Scythians themselves. But in the 4th century B. C. thematic anthropomorphous compositions became widespread. In this way, the high artistic skills of antique craftsmen were used, as it were, in the service of Scythian ideology.

The first such monument, which became famous throughout the world, was found 150 years ago in the Crimea, in the rich Scythian kurgan of Kul Oba. It is a small electrum vessel ornamented with figures of Scythian warriors. The find was immediately appreciated by the specialists, since for the first time historians had access to a picture of the Scythians made by an observant and talented contemporary artist with ethnographic precision. But the meaning of the scenes on the vessel remained for a long time incomprehensible. Only recently has the suggestion been made that those were episodes from the Scythian myth, already mentioned here, of the trial of three brothers claiming the Scythian throne. One of the characters—presumably the victorious younger brother—is fixing the string to the bow, while the two others are his brothers who have failed and are now treating their injuries sustained during their unsuccessful attempts. The same theme most likely figures on the silver cup found in a small mound from the Scythian times near Voronezh. Here, the youngest brother who has won in the trial of strength is given his father's bow, while the two other brothers are driven from the land. The popularity among Scythians of that theme, reflected in other monuments as well, is explained by the fact that that myth was the ideological basis for the institution of royal power, implying its divine sanctification. Other ritual and mythological scenes are also represented in Graeco-Scythian art.

One of the most remarkable monuments of that series is the gold pectoral recently discovered by Ukrainian archaeologists in the Tolstaya Mogila kurgan; this is an open-work breast ornament comprising several dozen miniature figurines of humans and animals. That complex composition reflected the Scythians', and other Indo-European peoples', view of the universe, of the cycle of death and life underlying all life processes. The scenes in which the horse, the deer and the wild boar are torn to pieces by predators and gryphons symbolise the world after death and death itself; they are placed in the lower



frieze of the pectoral. The upper frieze is adorned with figurines of domestic animals with their young; that is the world of life, the world of the fertile forces of nature. There are also two figurines of Scythians here performing a ritual act—making clothes of sheepskin which, as many peoples believe, has the magic property of increasing fertility. On the whole, the composition on the pectoral is a kind of pictorial equivalent of a charm intended to ensure the well-being and prosperity of the community headed by the ruler wearing the sacred object.

Many ceremonial objects from the Scythian kurgans are ornamented with scenes from Greek myths and epics, with figures of Athena, Medusa, Heracles, and episodes from the Trojan War. This is sometimes seen as evidence for the spreading of Hellenistic cults among Scythians, but it is much more likely that these pictures were re-interpreted by the Scythians as illustrations of their own myths and as manifestations of their own gods and heroes.

*The Decline of the Scythian Kingdom.* The rise of the Scythian kingdom in the 4th and early 3rd centuries B. C. was the last one in its history. The internal causes of the political and cultural decline of Scythia are not yet clear to the scholars. The external factors that contributed to it are known better. Antique sources recorded the grave defeat inflicted on the Scythians by Philip of Macedonia in 339 B. C., when the Scythian ruler Atheas, by that time 90 years old, fell in battle. But the downfall of the Scythians was determined by a different event—the beginning of the Sarmatian advance into the Pontic region. Towards the 2nd century B. C. the Sarmatians, occupied the whole of the Dnieper's left bank, and at the turn of the millennium moved in on the right bank as well. In describing the Sarmatian invasion, Diodorus Siculus reports that they laid waste a considerable part of Scythia, massacring all the vanquished to a man and making a desert of most of the country. That invasion could not, of course, destroy the entire population of Scythia. Some Scythians survived in the numerous fortified settlements that arose at the time on both banks of the Dnieper. The culture of that region bears traces inherited from the epoch of the rise of the Scythian kingdom as well as traits borrowed from the new inhabitants of the Pontic region, the Sarmatians.

*The Eastern Parts of the Scythian World.* In treating of the Scythians, we have constantly compared archaeological data with evidence provided by antique authors, whereas the history and culture of the more eastern parts of the steppe belt are almost entirely reconstructed from archaeological materials. Hundreds and even thousands of kurgans belonging to different tribes inhabiting these lands have been excavated by several generations of Russian and Soviet researchers, so that a very complete picture comes to light here.

Thus, an original culture from the Scythian times was discovered in the Aral Sea area and the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, where apparently tribes related to the Pontic Scythians lived. Another people of related culture left its kurgans in central Kazakhstan. Excavations of kurgans in eastern Kazakhstan have yielded two sensational discoveries in recent decades. One of these was the kurgan in the Chilikta valley belonging to the earliest monuments of the Scythian epoch in the Asian steppes. The monuments of the animal style found in the eastern regions of the Scythian world—small gold plates with figures of panthers, deer, wild boars, birds of prey—are very important for understanding the history of the formation and spreading of that art. The other discovery was at the famous Issyk kurgan near Alma Ata. It dates to a later period, 4th or 3rd century B. C., and contains the tomb of a chieftain in ceremonial raiment. His whole costume was covered with stamped gold plates of varying size, of which there were several thousands. That is one of the few rich burials of the Scythian epoch that were not robbed either in antiquity or later, and the researchers were thus able to reconstruct the dead man's garments in detail. Of the greatest interest is the headdress adorned with protomae of horses, figures of various animals and gold arrows. The researchers believe that the structure of that headdress reflects ancient cosmological notions—the vertical division of the universe into three worlds—heavenly, terrestrial, and subterranean or chthonic—and the symbolism of the four cardinal points.

Barrows of various peoples of the Scythian world were also excavated in the Pamir Mountains, the Minusinsk plain, and in the Tuva Mountains. It was in Tuva that a remarkable monument, the kurgan Arzhan, was excavated in recent years. The stone mound or cairn, 120 metres in diameter, was erected

over the burial of a chieftain of a large tribal union and his retinue, or the chieftains of the tribes he ruled over, who accompanied him to the next world. The burial catacomb under the mound was a complex structure: radiating from the central burial were 70 cabins of thick logs, with nearly a hundred separate chambers inside and between these cabins. Regrettably, the Arzhan burials were thoroughly robbed, but the monumental quality of the burial structures, the objects that survived the plunder, and the number of skeletons of riding horses (about 160) speak of the wealth and nobility of the chieftain buried here. The proponents of the Central Asian origin of the Scythians believe that the discovery at Arzhan provides the definitive answer to the question of where the homeland of the Scythians lay. But many features of the Arzhan complex, of the funeral ritual and material culture represented in it indicate that the mound was built by a population similar to the Scythians in culture yet distinct from them. There is still no conclusive evidence for Central Asia being the homeland of the Pontic Scythians.

Of the various cultures of the Scythian world, special mention should be made of the Pazyryk type of monuments discovered in the Altai Mountains. In ancient times the Pazyryk culture was most likely no different from other cultures of the Eurasian steppe belt, but it provides unique information for modern archaeology on the everyday life, art and culture as a whole of the peoples of the Scythian world – much more comprehensive information than the monuments of other regions. The point is that owing to the climatic conditions of the areas where monuments of the Pazyryk type are found, and especially because of the construction of the tombs, local lenses of permafrost were formed under the barrows. Because of this, certain objects made of wood, leather, and cloth, that is, of materials that ordinarily perish in the earth without trace and are not found during excavations, have been preserved in the Pazyryk tombs and some other burials of this type. A great number of ornaments and utensils of carved wood, the clothes of the dead, felt and nap carpets have been found in the Pazyryk kurgans. Even the bodies buried here have been preserved. Their skin was covered with intricate tattoo patterns.

Monumental burial chambers built of thick logs have been excavated in the kurgans of the Altai Mountains. In these chambers stood coffins hol-

lowed out of the trunks of old larches, sometimes decorated on the outside by carved figures of moving animals. The walls of the burial chambers were hung with felt carpets covered with ritual-mythological designs. On one of the Pazyryk carpets the figures of a queen or, more likely, goddess seated on the throne and a horseman standing before her are repeated many times. Wool cloth and nap carpets of Near Eastern (Persian or Median) provenance were found here as well as Chinese silk embroideries, the most ancient now existing in the world. These finds point to the wide trading and cultural contacts of the peoples of the Scythian world.

*The Heritage of Scythian Culture.* The millennia that have elapsed since the times of Scythian domination over the Eurasian steppes have been quite turbulent in this region. Its population has changed several times over. No peoples now living in the steppe belt can be regarded as direct descendants of the Scythians. The search for traces of Scythian heritage in the living cultures of the present-day peoples is an exceptionally difficult though quite feasible task. Thus many subjects and motifs of the Nartian epics of the peoples of the Caucasus, above all of the Ossetes, are rightly associated with the Scythian epoch. The Ossetes are an Iranian-speaking people, and its historical formation has been affected by tribes of the Scythian world, if not by the Scythians themselves. The narrative about Batrazd, one of the principal protagonists of the Nartian epics, displays features that are close to the Scythians' notions of one of their deities, the "Scythian Ares" mentioned above. The suggestion has also been made that some of the motifs of the Nartian epics reflect the contacts between the Scythian-related peoples and the rulers of the Bosphorus kingdom which existed in antiquity on the coast of the Kerch Strait.

Elements of Scythian culture also penetrated other ethnic environments, e. g., the Dnieper Slavonic one, so that motifs of Scythian art are sometimes discovered in Ukrainian and Russian folk art. Thus the view has been expressed that certain elements of folk embroidery, which were still used by Russian peasants in the early 20th century, can be traced back to the Scythian epoch. The theme of "Viy", a story by Nikolai Gogol, echoes ancient

Iranian, and in particular Scythian, mythology, its principal fantastic character recognisable as Vayu, the ancient Iranian god of death and the underworld.

Our knowledge of the peoples of the steppe belt of Eurasia and of their culture has been pieced together by several generations of scholars through painstaking comparison of various sources.

Archaeology has confirmed the truth of much of the evidence of the antique tradition concerning Scythians, and also refuted or modified some of it. Archaeological studies of the Eurasian steppes continue and are at present especially intense. Further discoveries undoubtedly will add to the current notions of the history and culture of the inhabitants of this region.

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## Chapter 7

### *The Civilisation of Ancient Iran*

*Geographical Conditions. The Population.* Iran is a tableland surrounded nearly on all sides by mountains; two-thirds of its territory are taken up by deserts and steppes. The climate in most regions is continental, with a very hot summer and hard frost in winter. There is little rain, and agriculture requires artificial irrigation. To avoid wasting the meagre water resources in evaporation, a system of subterranean canals leading to the fields was built. From very ancient times, the population's principal occupations were cattle-breeding and land cultivation.

Iran's south-western part (the modern province of Huzistan) was taken up by Elam, a country of mountains and plains. Its favourable natural conditions facilitated a rapid development of the productive forces. The plains of Elam (Susiana) were abundantly irrigated by the Karun and the Karkheh. That alluvial plain was one of the most ancient areas of agricultural civilisation. Abundant crops of barley, emmer and fruits were grown there as early as the 4th and 3rd millennia B. C. The mountainous areas of Elam (the modern Bakhtiari Mountains) were rich in timber and mineral resources (copper, tin, lead, basalt, obsidian).

Fertile Media in the north-west of the country, and Persia in the south of the tableland, were of great significance in Iran's ancient history. The name Persia comes from "Persis", the Greek rendering of the country's local name, Parsa, of which the modern name Fars is an Arabicised form. The name "Iran" occurs for the first time in antique authors in the 3rd century B. C. "Iran" is a shortened form of "Ariana", "the land of the Aryans", as the Persians and the Medes who lived in this country were a

branch of the peoples calling themselves Aryans (Arya, Airya).

Elam's primordial inhabitants were the Elamites who, according to some scholars, were related to the Dravidic tribes living east of them on the territory of the modern Baluchistan. Tribes of non-Indo-European origin—Qutians, Hurrians, Lullubi and Kassites—lived in the western foothills of the Zagros Mountains, in north-western Iran.

Late in the 12th and early in the 11th centuries B. C., Median and Persian tribes constituting the Iranian branch of the Indo-European peoples began to settle in what is now western Iran. At present, most scholars believe that at the beginning of the 2nd millennium B. C. Iranian tribes lived in southern Russia, and later part of them moved across the Caucasus to Iran along the Caspian coast, but generally the problem of the homeland of Indo-Iranians and Iranians is a controversial one, and no definitive solution as yet exists.

*The Sources.* The history of ancient Iran is abundantly documented by various written sources, such as economic records, historical inscriptions, royal decrees, orders from provincial governors, correspondence between officials, etc. The earliest of these texts throw light on Elamite history between the 3rd and the 1st millennia B. C. These earliest texts include royal inscriptions, business and legal documents, and treaties between peoples.

Numerous inscriptions of Persian kings from the 6th and 5th centuries have also been preserved in Old Persian, Elamite and Akkadian texts. The most

famous of these is the Behistun rock inscription recording the turbulent political events of the later period of Cambyses's reign and the first years of the reign of Darius I in the 6th century B.C.

Of great importance for the study of the ideology of the ancient Iranians is Avesta, the sacred books of the Zoroastrian religion. Originally it consisted of twenty-one books expounding the mythological and religious concepts of eastern Iranians living in Central Asia. But only fragments of these texts have survived to the present times. Avesta was finally collected, canonised and recorded in Aramaic script by Zoroastrian priests in the 1st-4th centuries A.D.

Several thousands of cuneiform documents in Elamite from the late 6th and the first half of the 5th centuries B.C. have been found in the ancient city of Persepolis. These texts, which form part of the archives of a royal estate, record the transportation of foodstuffs, collecting of taxes, distribution of rations among labourers, and payment of salary to state officials.

Numerous papyri and leather scrolls in Aramaic, which was the official language of the Persian state administration, have also been preserved. They include edicts of Persian kings and other official documents. Of special value are the archives of Arsamea, Persian satrap in Egypt, whose letters offer a living picture of the Persian rule in that country in the 5th century B.C. The letters contain instructions on recruiting manpower, handling recalcitrant slaves, and managing the estates of Persian magnates.

The principal narrative sources on the history of ancient Iran are works by Greek authors. Almost all of the diplomatic and political history of the 5th and 4th centuries B.C. is known to us from these works only. Particularly important among them is Herodotus's *History*. It is an extremely valuable source on the history, economy and ethnography of the peoples of the Persian empire, providing detailed descriptions of its administrative system and material resources. In his *History*, Thucydides offers a detailed and reliable account of the wars between Persia, Sparta and Athens between 433-411, and even cites the texts of the treaties concluded between these states. Xenophon's *Hellenica* is in fact a continuation of that work. Xenophon wrote several other books containing vital information about the Persian empire. His historical memoirs entitled *Anabasis*, a

story of the rebellion led by the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger in the late 5th century B.C., are of special value, with their wealth of cultural-historical materials on the mode of life, modes and customs of the Persians and other peoples of the Persian empire. At the same time *Anabasis* is one of the best works of world literature, which can still evoke a lively interest.

Written sources pertaining to Iran of the Parthian period (3rd century B.C.—3rd century A.D.), mostly works by classical authors, are very scant. Of these sources, Pompeius Trogus's history of Parthia, ending with the events of the year 9 B.C., is especially important, but it has survived only in a shortened version by Justin, a 3rd-century A.D. author.

Excavations of Soviet archaeologists at Nisa, on the territory of the modern Turkmenian Soviet Socialist Republic, the homeland of the early Parthian kings, revealed large archives of business documents written in Indian ink on clay sherds in Parthian. More than 2,500 texts dating from the period between 100 B.C. and 13 A.D. have been found. The Soviet scholars V. A. Livshits and I. M. Dyakonov have achieved some remarkable results in the study of these most valuable materials. These excavations have also yielded a wealth of data for the study of the history of culture, including objects of art and remnants of buildings.

Most sources on the history of Iran in the Sassanian epoch (3rd to 7th centuries A.D.) are narrative in character. One of them is *Chuataynamak* (Book of Lords), translated in the 8th century from Middle Persian into Arabic. To the same genre belongs the historical novel *The Book of the Deeds of Ardashir, Son of Papak*—an account of the struggle for the throne at the time of the emergence of the Sassanian state. A considerable number of rock inscriptions made by kings and magnates have also been preserved.

Of special interest is a code of laws from Sassanian times providing solutions for marital and property legal disputes.

In Sassanian times, an extensive religious literature arose, of which only insignificant remnants have survived. Especially interesting among them is *Denkart*, with its wealth of data on Zoroastrian doctrines and customs.

Extensive materials on the history of ancient Iran have been brought to light by archaeological excavations on its territory that have gone on for

decades. The ground plans of the palaces and mighty fortifications of Iran's ancient capitals—Susa, Pasargadae, Persepolis, monumental statues and reliefs, exquisite objects of precious metals (rhytons, weapons and ornaments) have been thoroughly studied.

*Early Civilisation on the Territory of Iran.* Elam was the first state that arose on Iran's territory. During the 3rd millennium B. C., the first tribal unions, which were in fact early state formations, appeared here. The capital of one of these unions was Susa, a large city in the valley of the Karun and the Karkheh (Karkheh) at a point where the most important routes connecting Elam with Mesopotamia and northern and eastern Iran crossed. Apart from Susa, there were also the states of Awan, Anshan and Kimash there, later included in a single state with the capital at Susa or, in some periods, at Anshan.

Elam's history was always closely linked with that of Mesopotamia. These countries were frequently at war, the wars ending in peace treaties and lively trading. In the 24th and 23rd centuries B. C. Susa was included in the Mesopotamian kingdom of Akkad. In the 22nd and 21st centuries, under the kings of the Third Dynasty of Ur, Elam remained under Mesopotamian domination, but in the second half of the 21st century it won independence and then subjugated the city of Ur. Under king Kudur-Nahhunte I (1730-1700 B. C.), the Elamites invaded Mesopotamia and, as a cuneiform inscription puts it, "laid their hands on the shrines of Akkad and turned Akkad to dust and ashes". Elam retained its independence until the mid-14th century, but then it was conquered by the Babylonians and remained under their rule for a long time. C. 1180, the Elamite king Shutruk-Nahhunte I drove the Babylonian army from Elam's territory and, after a victorious campaign in that country, sacked the cities of Sippar, Kish, and Opis, leaving with a rich booty which included the stele bearing the Hammurapi Code.

In 1159-1157 B. C., the Elamite king Kudur-Nahhunte III waged war on Babylonia, ruled at that time by Enlil-nadin-ahhe, the last member of the Kassite dynasty. The war ended in a complete victory for the Elamites who seized Babylon, Sippar, Nippur, and other cities. That was the time when Elamite might reached its peak; in Iran itself, Elamite

kingdom ruled over a territory stretching from the Persian Gulf in the south to the neighbourhood of the modern city of Hamadan in the north. But then the Elamites suffered a defeat at the hands of the Babylonians. Late in the 12th century B. C., the Babylonians invaded Elam and laid it waste, and it took Elam three centuries to recover from that depredation.

In the 8th century B. C., when Babylon was fighting for its independence from Assyria, Elam became Babylonia's ally and was embroiled in endless wars with the Assyrians. At first Elam and its allies were successful in their military operations. In 720 B. C., the Elamites inflicted a crushing defeat on the Assyrians in the battle of Der, in eastern Babylonia, but in 710 the Assyrian king Sargon II invaded Elam and routed its army. In 700, an Assyrian flotilla sailed towards the mouth of the river Karkheh, and the Assyrian troops, disembarking there, looted the Elamite cities on the river's banks and returned home with a rich booty.

In 692, the Babylonians rose in revolt against the Assyrians, and Elam, true to its traditional policy, decided to support the rebels. All the tribes of the Zagros Mountains, including the Persians, united round Elam. A strong army was raised, with Elamite and Persian charioteers, infantry and cavalry for its nucleus. The battle with the Assyrians took place in the locality of Halule on the Tigris. Although the Elamites defeated the Assyrians, their losses were so heavy that they could not pursue the enemy into his territory.

When the Babylonian king Shamash-shum-ukin rebelled in 652 against Assyria, the Elamites again were involved in the war on the side of Babylonia. The war ended c. 642 in a complete defeat for Elam and the seizure of Susa by the Assyrians.

C. 596 B. C., the Babylonians managed to establish their rule over Elam, and in 549 it was seized by the Persians and lost its independence for ever.

The Elamites created an original culture. In the early 3rd millennium B. C. they invented a pictographic script which had several hundreds of symbols and was used for 400 years for business records. In this system, cattle, jars, etc., were drawn on clay tablets to express certain concepts.

In the second half of the 3rd millennium, the Elamite linear syllabic script emerged, which had some 80 signs and could be used to record not only



economic but also political and religious texts. But in most areas of Elam the linear script was in use for a short time only; the most important texts in it refer to the 23rd century. It was soon replaced by the Sumerian-Akkadian cuneiform script. In the first half of the 2nd millennium B.C., the Elamites mostly used Akkadian for writing business and legal documents as well as literary texts, but in the second half of that millennium considerable numbers of cuneiform texts in Elamite appeared. The Elamites used the cuneiform script borrowed from Mesopotamia until the 5th century B.C.

Elam's religious centre was Susa. The Elamite pantheon was headed by Pinekir ("the great goddess"), regarded as the mother of the gods. The cult of "the great goddess" indicates the existence of survivals of matriarchal relations in Elamite society. A great role was also played by the cult of Inshushinak, the patron of Susa and the god of the subterranean world. The sun-god Nahhunte was regarded as the creator of daylight. All gods, according to Elamite beliefs, had supernatural, magic powers, which protected royalty. The numerous priests were presided over by the supreme priest, who enjoyed considerable influence at court and often accompanied the king during his campaigns.

Original art emerged in Elam already in the 4th millennium B.C. Elamite pottery of that period is ornamented with elegant geometrical patterns and stylised figures of birds, animals and humans. The art of the 3rd millennium is represented by pictures of gryphons, winged lions and daemons, and by scenes of everyday life preserved on contemporary seals.

In the second half of the 3rd and in the 2nd millennia Elamite art was strongly affected by that of Sumer and Babylonia. The masterpiece of Elamite art, skilfully wrought bronze statue of queen Napir-asu, weighs 1,800 kilograms. The queen's posture is one of majestic tranquillity.

With the growth of the country's political role in the 13th and 12th centuries, Elamite art flourished. A striking example of Elamite monumental architecture of that time is the 13th-century ziggurat in the city of Dur-Untash (modern Tchoga-Zembil) not far from Susa. Golden and silver figures of lions, bulls, gryphons, and statues of gods and kings stood at the entrance to the four-storey ziggurat (total height, 42 metres; length of each side of the base,

105 metres). Millions of bricks and hundreds of thousands of stone blocks were used in its construction.

After the capture of Elam by the Persians, the cultural achievements of the Elamites made a great impact on the material and spiritual culture of the conquerors.

*The Median Kingdom.* Beginning with the 9th century B.C., the Assyrians regularly raided and looted Media. At that time, the transition from primitive communal relations to class ones was only beginning in the north-western corner of Iran, and dozens of small principalities existed there, with a mixed population of Medes and the older settlers of Qutian-Kassite origin. The Assyrians campaigned as far east as the central areas of the Iranian plateau. Thus in 744 the Assyrian king Tiglath-pileser III reached Bikni Mountains (modern Demavend near Tehran), exacting from the Medes the tribute of nine tons of lapis lazuli and 15 tons of bronze ware. During the 8th century, the population of the Median provinces was under Assyrian domination and regularly paid the Assyrians tribute, mostly in handicraft products and cattle.

Late in the 8th century B.C., the first major tribal unions, the embryonic states, began to arise on the territory of western Iran, headed by tribal chieftains. Manna, a region east of Assyria, was one of such unions. Manna was ruled by Dayukku (Gr. Deioces), who was regarded as Assyria's governor of that country. In 716, the Urartaeon king Rusa captured 22 Mannaeon fortresses and compelled Dayukku to break off with Assyria. But the Assyrian king Sargon II destroyed the Urartaeon army, captured Dayukku in 715 and deposed him.

Assyria's position was soon aggravated by the invasion of Cimmerian tribes into the territories under its sway. In the last decades of the 8th century B.C. the Cimmerians headed from the north Pontic region along the Black Sea coast to Asia Minor. In the early 7th century B.C., Scythian tribes also advanced into Asia Minor, though by a different route, namely, along the Caspian coast. Some Scythians settled in the Sakasena area in Transcaucasia and from that stronghold raided on Urartu and Assyria. Ethnically and linguistically, both Scythians and Cimmerians were related to Persians.

For a long time, the Cimmerians stayed in the

country of Gimirra in the eastern part of Cappadocia (Asia Minor). In 679 they invaded Assyria but suffered a defeat there.

In 673, taking advantage of the hostilities between Assyrians and Cimmerians, Median tribes rose against the Assyrian yoke under the leadership of Kashtariti, a tribal chieftain. The Cimmerians and the Scythians supported the Medes, but the Assyrian king Esarhaddon broke up that alliance by marrying his daughter to the Scythian chief Partatua. The Medes, however, continued the struggle and in 672 succeeded in founding an independent state. Little by little Kashtariti began to unite all the Median tribes, abolishing the petty principalities.

By the mid-8th century, Media became a major state, of the same stature as Assyria, Urartu or Manna. In 653 the Median king Kashtariti went to war against Assyria, but was attacked by the Scythians, at that time Assyrian allies. Unable to keep up the fighting on two fronts, the Medes were defeated, and Kashtariti himself fell in battle. After that failure, the Medes were subjugated by the Scythians (653-625).

In 625, Cyaxares became king of Media. Defeating the Scythians, he finally united all the Median tribes in one state, of which the capital became Ecbatana (modern Hamadan). Soon Cyaxares had a strong regular army reorganised into forces according to the type of weapons (spear-bearers, archers, and cavalry), instead of the former tribal levies.

The Medes could now turn on their old enemy, Assyria, which at the time had been fighting Babylonia for ten years. In 614, the Median army led by Cyaxares attacked Assyria and defeated it in several decisive battles fought over a number of years. That brought them mastery over northern Mesopotamia.

Relations between Media and Babylonia remained good, but the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar II was afraid of the growing might of that country, realising that sooner or later that ally would become a dangerous adversary. Nebuchadnezzar therefore built a fortified wall along the Median border.

In the meantime the Median king Cyaxares expanded his state at the expense of his southern and eastern neighbours. Persia was among the first to be attacked, and the Persian king Cambyses held on to power only at the price of becoming a Median vas-

sal. Cyaxares also captured Parthia and Hyrcania, the regions south and east of the Caspian. C. 593, the Medes conquered Urartu, and in 590 also annexed Manna, previously a dependency of Assyria.

In 590 all of Cappadocia (in Asia Minor) as far as the Halys (modern Kizil Irmak) was seized by the Medes. In that same year, as the Median army approached the Halys, Alyattes, king of Lydia, the largest state in Asia Minor, worried by Cyaxares's conquests, attacked him. The war between Media and Lydia lasted six years, but neither side could win it. When a solar eclipse occurred during a battle on the river Halys on May 29, 584, both sides interpreted it as a bad omen and decided to stop the war. Soon a peace treaty was concluded, according to which the Halys became the border between Lydia and the Median empire. The peace treaty was followed by a marriage between Alyattes's daughter and Cyaxares's son Astyages.

In 584 Cyaxares died, leaving to Astyages the heritage of a powerful empire. Soon Astyages established his rule over Elam, formerly a vassalage of Babylonia. This brought about a sharp deterioration of the relations between Babylonia and Media, and both sides began to prepare for war, little knowing that they would soon have to fight for their lives against a new and powerful enemy. That enemy was the Persians, who revolted against Media and in 550 B. C. conquered that country.

*Median Society and Culture.* Unfortunately, we have at present no direct information on the social and state structure of Median society, as no archives of economic documents from Median times have so far been discovered.

The seizure of the stupendous wealth accumulated during many centuries by Assyrian kings and nobles through aggressive wars and heavy tributes noticeably accelerated the class stratification of Median society, since the lion's share of the booty fell into the hands of the nobles, while the economic position of the commonalty, who made up the nucleus of the Median army, deteriorated as a result of the long years of war. Towards the middle of the 6th century B. C., when large sections of the Median commonalty became enslaved by the nobility the country fell prey to external enemies.

In the 7th and first half of the 6th century Media

was the focus of the development of both material and nonmaterial culture in Iran, which was later absorbed and further developed by the Persians.

However, excavation of Median archaeological monuments is only beginning. Median palatial culture, just as specimens of Median monumental art, still have to be discovered. The task is made very difficult by the fact that the ruins of Ecbatana, Median capital, now lie under the houses of Hamadan, the modern Iranian city. Herodotus and Polybius left descriptions of the royal palace at Ecbatana, which apparently formed a whole architectural complex surrounded by seven fortified walls. Each wall rose as high as the bastion of the next outer wall, and the bastions themselves were painted in different colours. Two of them, those closest to the palace, were covered with silver and gilt. The palace was more than one kilometre in circuit. The ceilings and porticoes of the palatial chambers were made of cedar plated with gold and silver.

*The Emergence of the Persian Empire.* Late in the 9th century B. C. and early in the 8th the Persians separated from the related Median tribes and went south, to the valleys of the Zagros Mountains. Already at the end of the 8th century the Persians formed a tribal union headed by chieftains from the noble Achaemenid clan. According to the Persian tradition, the dynasty was founded by Achaemenes. In the 7th century the Persians occupied Elamite territory in the south and south-west of Iran, which came to be known as Parsa (Persia), and later gradually spread out across considerable portions of the Iranian tableland.

Between c. 640 and 600 B. C., the Persians were ruled by Cyrus I. When the Assyrians defeated Elam in 642, Cyrus I recognised Assyria's supremacy. Cyrus I was succeeded by Cambyses I (c. 600-559 B. C.), a vassal of the Median king Astyages. Cambyses was married to Astyages's daughter Mandane, and Cyrus II was thus Astyages's grandson.

Several contradictory legends, a fantastic mixture of historical data and folktale motifs, have been preserved about the childhood and adolescence of Cyrus II. The most widespread of these is the legend recounted in Herodotus's work, according to which Astyages had a dream which was interpreted by the court priests in the sense that soon a grandson would

be born to him who would seize the royal throne. Astyages then sent for Mandane, deciding to eliminate the grandson that had just been born and named Cyrus. He entrusted Harpagus, a courtier of his, with the task. The latter in his turn handed the child over to Mithridates, a royal slave, ordering him to take the child into the mountains, where there were many wild beasts, and leave him there. When Mithridates brought Cyrus to his hut in the mountains, his wife had just produced a stillborn child. The parents decided to bring up Cyrus as their own son, dressing the stillborn child in the splendid clothes of Astyages's grandson and leaving it in a remote corner of the mountains. Mithridates then reported to Harpagus that he had carried out the latter's orders, whereupon Harpagus sent certain men loyal to him to examine Cyrus's body and bury it, convinced that the king's will had been done.

When Cyrus was ten, he was one day elected king while playing with other children and punished the son of a certain noble Mede for refusing to carry out his orders. The father of the child thus abused complained to Astyages, saying that a slave of his was beating the sons of royal officials. When Cyrus was brought to Astyages, the latter formed the suspicion that it was his own grandson, for he saw his own features in the child. Interrogating Mithridates under threat of terrible torture, Astyages learnt the truth. First of all he cruelly punished Harpagus, inviting him to a feast and secretly giving him to eat the meat of his own son, Cyrus's playmate. Then Astyages again asked his priests whether there was still any danger to his throne from Cyrus. The priests answered that the dream had already come true, as Cyrus had been elected king in playing with other children, and that Astyages no longer needed to be afraid of his grandson. The king's mind was thus set at rest, and he sent Cyrus to Persia, to his parents.

In 558 B. C., Cyrus became king of Persian tribes of husbandmen, among which Pasargadae were the most important. At approximately the same time he founded the city of Pasargadae, which became the capital of the Persian state.

At the beginning of his reign, Cyrus recognised Astyages as his suzerain. At that time, there were four major powers left in the Middle East – Media, Lydia, Babylonia, and Egypt. Media was already preparing to attack Babylonia, and the relations between the two states were strained. But Babylonia

was temporarily saved from an onslaught from the east by Cyrus's revolt against Astyages in 553 B. C.

When Astyages learnt of Cyrus's preparations for a war with Media, he summoned him through a messenger. Cyrus replied that he would come sooner than Astyages expected him. That impudent answer sparked off the rebellion. The outcome of the war was decided in two battles. Astyages did not take part in the first engagement, and his general Harpagus, together with a large part of the army, deserted to Cyrus. Then Astyages ordered all Medes, including old men and youths, to take up arms, and led the army into battle himself, despite his advanced age. Still the Medes suffered a defeat, and Astyages himself was captured. Cyrus did him no harm, however, and even treated him graciously. The war ended in 550 with the capture of the Median capital Ecbatana by the Persians.

In the next few years the Persians conquered the countries which were part of the former Median empire—Elam, Parthia, Hyrcania, and Armenia.

Worried by Cyrus's meteoric success, Croesus, king of Lydia, the most powerful state of Asia Minor, began preparations for a war with Persia.

On the initiative of the Egyptian pharaoh Amasis, an anti-Persian alliance was concluded c. 549 between Egypt and Lydia. But the allies failed to realise the need to act speedily and decisively, as Persia was growing more powerful with every passing day.

Before starting active operations, Croesus sought moral support in favourable omens from the gods, sending his messengers to the Apollo temple at Delphi, to the shrine of the Egyptian god Amon in the Libyan oasis, and other temples. The messengers bore numerous valuable gifts, most of which went to Apollo. When asked whether the Lydians should start a war with Cyrus, Apollo's oracle gave an ambiguous answer, saying that Croesus would destroy a great kingdom if he crossed the river Halys, and also advising him to find a powerful ally.

Interpreting this answer as favourable to himself, Croesus sent ambassadors to friendly Sparta with gifts and a request for a military alliance. The Spartans willingly agreed to an alliance against a people whose name they most likely had not even heard before. Thereupon Croesus, sure of his success, began military operations in Cappadocia.

Croesus set up camp near Sinope in Cappadocia.

Cyrus also went there, increasing his army along the way by recruiting the forces of those countries which he was crossing. A bloody battle was fought, but it ended inconclusively, and neither side risked starting a new engagement.

Croesus retreated to his capital Sardis, deciding to make thorough preparations for the war and to enlist effective support from his allies, Egypt and Sparta. He sent messengers to Sparta with a request to send an army some time in spring, when he planned to engage the Persians in a decisive battle. He also dismissed his mercenaries, ordering them to return to his army before spring.

Cyrus, who knew of Croesus's actions and intentions, decided to catch the enemy unawares; covering several hundred kilometres at a fast clip, he appeared before the gates of Sardis, whose citizens were not expecting the Persian king at all.

Croesus led his cavalry, which was considered to be invincible, onto the plain before Sardis. On the advice of his general Harpagus, Cyrus mounted some of his warriors on the camels from his transport and sent them before the main body of his troops. On seeing and smelling these strange animals, Lydian horses stampeded. The Lydian warriors did not lose their heads, however; dismounting, they fought on foot. A bloody battle ensued, but the forces were too unequally matched. Overwhelmed by superior numbers, the Lydians had to withdraw, and then fled to Sardis, where they were besieged in an impregnable fortress.

Assuming that the siege would be a long one, Croesus sent messengers to Sparta, Babylon, and Egypt appealing for immediate help. Of all the allies, only the Spartans responded to the Lydian king's plea and prepared an expeditionary force, but soon received the news that Sardis had fallen.

The siege of Sardis lasted only 14 days. An attempt to take the city by storm failed, but a warrior of Cyrus's army, who came from the Mardi mountain tribe, chanced to notice that a warrior went down an apparently inaccessible rock to pick up the helmet he had dropped and then climbed back. That part of the acropolis was believed to be entirely impregnable and was therefore not guarded by the Lydians at all. The Mardian clambered up the rock and was followed by other warriors. The city fell, and Croesus was taken prisoner (547 B. C.)

According to a tradition, Croesus reproached

Apollo's oracle for having deceived him, despite the generous gifts, by predicting victory and thus inciting him to war. When the wily priests of Delphi learnt of these reproaches, they declared that Croesus had misinterpreted the oracle's prophecy about the Lydian king destroying a great kingdom by beginning a war. The prophecy had come true, the priests said, for the Lydian kingdom had fallen; before starting the war, Croesus should have asked which kingdom the oracle meant.

Cyrus spared Croesus's life.

After the capture of Lydia came the turn of the Greek cities of Asia Minor. Their citizens sent messengers to Sparta, appealing for help. All Greek cities were in danger, except for Miletus, which had hurried to submit to Cyrus, and the insular Hellenes, whom the Persians could not touch, having no fleet.

When the messengers from the Greek cities of Asia Minor arrived at Sparta, they appealed for help but were refused by the Lacedaemonians.

The task of conquering the Greek cities and the other peoples of Asia Minor was entrusted to Cyrus's general Harpagus. He raised high mounds before the walls of Greek cities and then stormed them. In that way Harpagus conquered the whole of Asia Minor with relative ease.

Between 545 and 539, Cyrus extended his conquests as far as Drangiana, Margiana, Khorezm, Sogdiana, Bactria, Arachosia and other countries east of Iran. The Persian empire now stretched to India's north-western borders and the basin of the river Jaxartes (Syr Darya). Cyrus then decided that the time had come to wage war on Babylonia.

In the spring of 539, the Persian army took the field. In August of that year, the Persians routed the Babylonian army near the city of Opis on the Tigris. In the autumn, Sippar was taken by storm, and soon the country's capital, Babylon, fell too.

After that all the western countries lying as far as the borders of Egypt voluntarily acknowledged Persian supremacy. The commercial circles of Phoenicia were interested in the setting up of a large state with safe roads, in which all transit trading would be in their hands.

Cyrus undoubtedly intended to seize Egypt as well, but he first decided to make the north-eastern borders of his state safe from the invasion of the Saka (Sacae) tribes of Central Asia. During a battle against the Massagetae, a Saka tribe, on the eastern

bank of the Oxus (Amu Darya) in the summer of 530, Cyrus's army was utterly destroyed and he himself fell in battle.

Several versions of Cyrus's death have been preserved. According to antique authors, the Persians' losses in the war against the Massagetae amounted to 200,000 dead. That figure is undoubtedly exaggerated. The most popular account of Cyrus's death is set down in detail in Herodotus's work. According to this tradition, Cyrus took the Massagetae's camp by cunning and slaughtered part of their force, but then the bulk of the Massagetae's army led by queen Tomyris inflicted a crushing defeat on the Persians, and Cyrus's cut-off head was dropped into a sack full of blood.

In August 530 B.C. Cambyses II, Cyrus's son, became king of the Persian empire. Several years later he began preparations for a war against Egypt. Besides Persians, contingents from all the peoples conquered by Cyrus served in Cambyses's army. Cambyses also had at his disposal the strong fleet of the Phoenician cities. The people of the island of Cyprus also took Cambyses's side, and their fleet supported his army. The Persian army was concentrated in Palestine. The nomads of the Sinai desert became the Persians' allies, and they helped them to cross the arid territory in order to get at Pelusium, an Egyptian frontier city.

In 525 B.C., after several battles, Egypt had to submit to the Persians. Cambyses then began preparations for a campaign against Ethiopia. With that aim in view, he founded several fortified cities in Upper Egypt. But Cambyses invaded Ethiopia without sufficient supplies of food, his army resorted to cannibalism, and he had to retreat. While Cambyses was campaigning, the Egyptians, aware of his failures, rose in revolt against the Persian rule.

*The Uprisings of Subjugated Peoples.* At the end of 524, Cambyses returned to Memphis, Egypt's capital, suppressed the Egyptian revolt and executed former pharaoh Psammetichus. In March 522 Cambyses received the news that his younger brother Bardiya had mutinied in Persia and seized the throne. Cambyses set out for Persia but died on the way there under mysterious circumstances.

This coup in Iran against Cambyses is reported in several sources. The official version is set down in

the Behistun inscription made on the orders of the Persian king Darius I. Other versions of the events of those times are contained in the works of the ancient Greek historians Herodotus, Ctesias, Xenophon, and others.

According to the Behistun inscription, Bardiya, Cyrus's younger son, was killed already before the Egyptian campaign. But according to Herodotus, Smerdis (that is his name for Bardiya) accompanied the army to Egypt. Cambyzes, afraid that Smerdis might cook a plot, sent him back to Persia and had him secretly assassinated.

Both the official and unofficial versions concur as to the subsequent course of events. A certain court Magian (named Gaumata, according to the Behistun inscription, and Smerdis, just as Cyrus's murdered son, according to Herodotus) declared himself to be Bardiya, i. e., Cyrus's son. Herodotus, Ctesias, and other antique historians insist that the Magian looked very much like Cyrus's younger son, and that helped him to become king under the latter's guise. According to Ctesias, the Magian resembled Cyrus's son so closely that even their nearest relatives could not distinguish them. Some modern scholars believe that Bardiya and the Magian Gaumata mentioned by Darius in the Behistun inscription are one and the same person, namely Cyrus's younger son whom Darius declared to be an impostor in order to justify his usurpation of royal power. It is at any rate hard to accept that the murder of Bardiya, Cyrus's son and ruler over several important countries, should have remained a secret for five years. How could Bardiya's sisters, mother, daughter and other relatives, his friends and servants fail to notice the substitution for such a long time, revealing the "secret" only five years later through Darius, who had killed his predecessor on the Persian throne and became king instead of him?

In relating the events that brought him to power, Darius was, most likely, compelled to consciously distort the facts. Darius admitted himself that his story would seem improbable to the reader of the Behistun inscription. Still, he insisted that everybody should believe his words and spread them as the true account. Darius's contemporaries apparently had little faith in the official version of the events of those times. It is for this reason that the king was so insistent in his plea to be believed: "You who will later read this inscription, believe what I have done, do

not regard it as lies... Tell the people about this... If you do not conceal this report from the people ... let your tribe increase and you yourself live long... If you conceal this report from the people ... let the god Ahuramazda strike you." According to Herodotus, before seizing the throne, Darius addressed his accomplices with these words: "Where there is need, one must lie. For we all pursue the same goal, those who lie and those who speak the truth." It is therefore doubtful that we shall ever know precisely who Darius's predecessor on the Persian throne was – the Magian Gaumata or Cyrus's son Bardiya.

But we know exactly that Gaumata revolted in 522 B. C. and won general recognition, was crowned according to the ancient custom at Pasargadae and became king of the whole empire of Cyrus and Cambyzes. To prevent further uprisings of the subjugated peoples, Gaumata cancelled taxes and conscription for three years. Throughout his reign there were therefore no uprisings in the whole state.

In the same year 522, after a seven-month reign, Gaumata was killed by conspirators in a sudden assault. The organiser of the conspiracy was the aristocratic Persian Otanes, who had attracted Darius and some other persons to his side. After Gaumata's assassination, discord began among the conspirators, but in the end Darius, who was at the time only 28, seized the throne.

Immediately after Darius's coming to power, Babylonia rose against him. Here, if we are to believe the Behistun inscription, a certain Nidintu-Bel declared himself to be the son of the last Babylonian king Nabonidus and began to rule under the name of Nebuchadnezzar. Darius himself led the campaign against the rebels. In the winter of 522, the Babylonians were defeated on the river Tigris, and five days later Darius won a new victory on the Euphrates. After that the Persians entered Babylon, and the leaders of the revolt were executed.

While Darius was in punitive action against Babylonia, Persia, Media, Elam, Margiana, Parthia, Satagydia, the Saka tribes of Central Asia, and Egypt all rose against him. A long, cruel and bloody fight for restoring the empire began.

The satrap of Bactria Dadarshish attacked the insurgents of neighbouring Margiana, in Central Asia, and defeated them. This was followed by the massacre of some 55,000 people.

In Persia itself a certain Wahyazdata, under the



name of Cyrus's son Bardiya, challenged Darius and gained extensive support among the people. He also captured the eastern Iranian provinces as far as Arachosia, and the revolt was crushed only after six months. Wahyazdata was taken prisoner and impaled, together with his closest confederates. After this the whole Persia was in the hands of Darius.

But uprisings in other countries continued. The first of these was in Elam. It was quickly suppressed, and the rebel leader was executed, but soon a certain Martiya again led the country in revolt. By the time Darius restored his power in Elam, all Media mutinied, led by Frawartish. That was one of the most dangerous uprisings, and Darius personally led the punitive expedition against it. In 521, the Medes were defeated; Frawartish and some of his supporters fled but were soon seized and taken to Darius, who punished them most cruelly. Frawartish's ears, nose and tongue were cut off, an eye was put out, and then he was taken to Ecbatana and impaled. His closest supporters were also taken there and gaoled in the fortress, then skinned alive and hung on the bastions.

Despite the terrible reprisals, fighting in other areas continued. In various provinces of Armenia, Darius's generals spent a long time trying to put down the revolt, but they only succeeded after receiving strong reinforcements from Darius.

Some time later, the Babylonians made a new attempt to win independence but were routed again.

That was the last major uprising, although unrest in the empire continued. It took Darius more than a year to consolidate his power base in the country and restore the empire of Cyrus and Cambyses in its old boundaries.

The numerous uprisings of the conquered peoples were caused by the heavy tribute imposed on them. Besides, these peoples had to bear the onus of the military conscription, and thousands of their craftsmen were deported to Iran to build royal palaces.

Darius's victory over the rebellious peoples was largely due to the absence of unity or coordination amongst them, and the exclusively defensive character of their actions. Still, that victory would have been impossible if he had no loyal regular army at his disposal. He had the support of the ten-thousand-strong "immortal" regiments (as the royal body-guard was called), of the army, the satraps loyal to

him, and the troops of the garrisons which, as a rule, consisted of foreigners in each satrapy. Darius used these forces very skilfully, unerringly sending them against the most dangerous uprisings.

After defeating his enemies, Darius could begin to build his splendid monument on the Behistun rock. This was a relief cut in the 105-metre-high sheer cliff, 30 kilometres south of the modern city of Kermanshah. The relief is accompanied by a magnificent inscription telling of Darius's victories. The relief was cut in the rock above the inscription. In it, the god Ahuramazda, floating as it were over all the figures, holds out a ring to Darius with his left hand, symbolically handing him the royal power, and with his raised right hand he gives Darius his blessing. Darius himself is portrayed lifesize, wearing the royal crown. His right hand is raised in prayer towards Ahuramazda, and the left one holds a bow. Darius's left foot tramples Gaumata, whose leg and arm twitch in agony. To the left, behind Darius's back, stand two courtiers, a spearbearer and an archer. Next to Gaumata are eight rebellious impostors and Skunkha, the chieftain of one of the Saka tribes in Central Asia. Their hands are tied behind their backs, and they are all fettered to a long chain.

Several years passed after Darius pacified the empire, and he decided to undertake new campaigns. Between 518 and 512, the Persians conquered Thracia and Macedonia; went on a campaign against the Pontic Scythians (a bootless one, it must be said); and captured the north-western part of India. At the end of the 6th century the Persian empire stretched from the river Indus in the east to the Aegean in the west, from Armenia in the north to the First Nile Cataract in the south.

*The Graeco-Persian Wars.* In the 6th century B. C., the leading role among the Greek regions was played by the Greek colonies in Asia Minor—Miletus, Ephesus, and others—and not by the Greeks of the Balkan peninsula. These colonies had fertile lands, handicrafts flourished there, and they had access to the extensive markets of the Persian empire.

After the capture of Asia Minor, Persian kings began supporting the tyrants, endeavouring to do away with the democratic self-government in the autonomous Greek states. In 500 B. C., an uprising against the Persian rule flared up in Miletus. The

Greek cities in the south and north of Asia Minor joined in the revolt, and the tyrants thrust on the cities by the Persians were everywhere overthrown. Aristagoras, the leader of the insurgents, appealed in 499 to the mainland Greeks for help. The Spartans refused to render any assistance, referring to the greatness of the distance. Only the Athenians and the Eretrians on the island of Euboea responded to the appeal, but they, too, sent only a small number of ships.

The rebellious cities set out against Sardis, the capital of the Lydian satrapy, took that city and burnt it. The Persian satrap and the garrison found refuge in the acropolis which the Greeks failed to take by storm. The Persians began drawing up their forces, and in the summer of 498 defeated the Greeks near the city of Ephesus, whereupon the Athenians and the Eretrians fled, leaving the Greeks of Asia Minor in the lurch. In the spring of 494, the Persians besieged Miletus, the insurgents' main stronghold, on land and sea. The city was captured and razed to the ground, and its population driven into captivity.

After that Darius began preparations for a campaign against mainland Greece, which at that time consisted of a great many autonomous city-states with different political systems permanently at war with one another. It appeared that the conquest of Greece would not be too difficult for the Persians, who had a huge well-equipped army and the best fleet in the world at that time.

In 492, the Persian army took the field, crossing Macedonia and Thrace, which had been conquered some twenty years before. But the Persian fleet was destroyed by a storm near Cape Athos on the Chalcidice peninsula, with a loss of some 20,000 lives and 300 ships. After that the land forces had to be taken back to Asia Minor, and the campaign had to be prepared anew.

In 491 B.C., Persian messengers were sent to Greece with demands for "earth and water", the tokens of submission to Darius. Most Greek cities acceded to the demand, but Athens and Sparta refused to submit to Persia and killed the royal messengers.

In the summer of 490, the Persian fleet under Datis was concentrated off Cilician shores. Cavalry and infantry under Artaphernes also gathered there, as well as transport ships to carry the horses. Taking

into account the sad experiences of the past, the Persian generals decided to ship the army across the Aegean Sea.

With the help of experienced Greek pilots, Persian ships set out for Attica and disembarked on the Marathon plain, 9 kilometres long and 3 kilometres wide, 40 kilometres from Athens. The Persian force could hardly have been more than 15 thousand strong.

Both sides marked time on the Marathon plain, not daring to start a decisive battle. The Persian army stood on open ground, where cavalry could be employed. The Athenians, who had no cavalry at all, were concentrated at the bottleneck of the plain, where the Persian horsemen could not operate. As time went by, the position of the Persian army was becoming more and more difficult, and Datis had to decide promptly on some course of action. He knew of the Spartans' intention to take the field, in accordance with the tradition, after the new moon appeared, and wanted to decide the outcome of the war before their arrival. At the same time he could not move his cavalry into the defile held by the Athenians. He decided to transfer part of the army to another area and capture Athens. The army had to be divided, which involved some risk. A task force, including cavalry, was embarked on ships—probably during the night, in the light of the moon. The success of the operation now depended on the surprise factor. But Miltiades, an Athenian general, guessed Datis's plans, or he may have had definite knowledge of them from the Ionians in the Persian camp. It was reported to Miltiades that the enemy cavalry had been embarked on ships, and only infantry with their light weapons remained on the plain.

The morning of August 12, 490 came. The Athenian army left its camp in battle order and swiftly advanced towards the enemy to engage him in a pitched battle. The Athenians' battle line was as long as the Persians', but their ranks were not as deep in the centre. That disposition accorded best with the traditional tactics of the two sides: the Persians concentrated their best units in the centre, while the Greeks endeavoured to win the fight on the flanks at any cost, in order to hit at the enemy's centre afterwards.

Persian warriors fought courageously and crushed the Athenian ranks in the centre, but their flanks

were overrun. After that the Athenians and Plataeans set upon the Persians who had broken through in the centre. The Persians and their allies began to retreat, suffering heavy losses; they left 6,400 dead on the battlefield, while the Athenians lost just 192 men.

The remnants of the Persian army sailed for Athens, but the Greek warriors rapidly moved there too, arriving earlier than the Persians. After that all the latter could do was set sail for Asia Minor.

The Greek victory at Marathon was the first victory over the Persian army, which had previously been regarded as invincible. There were several causes for the Persians' defeat. Although their army was somewhat stronger than the Athenians', only part of it was able to fight in the decisive battle. Besides, the Persians were operating in an unfamiliar country. The Greek infantrymen (*hoplites*) were clad in armour, and the Persian archers with their light weapons could not break up their ranks. The main thing was, of course, that the Athenians were fighting for their country and their democratic system, and could expect nothing but slavery in case of defeat.

Despite the debacle at Marathon, Darius would not give up his plans of a new campaign against Greece. Preparations for such a campaign required a great deal of time, though, and in the meantime a revolt against the Persian rule flared up in October 486 in Egypt. A month later Darius died, and one of his sons, Xerxes, acceded to the throne.

In January 484, Xerxes crushed the revolt in Egypt. The country was ruthlessly pillaged, and the property of many temples was confiscated. In the summer of 484, a fresh uprising broke out, this time in Babylonia, but it was quickly put down. Two years later, however, the Babylonians rebelled again. That mutiny, which involved most of the country, was especially dangerous, as by that time Xerxes was already in Asia Minor, preparing for a war against the Greeks. The siege of Babylon lasted a long time, and ended in March 481 in harsh reprisals. The city walls and other fortifications were razed, and many houses destroyed. Babylonia was degraded to the rank of an ordinary satrapy, and its capital lost its political significance for ever.

In the meantime, preparations for a new campaign against the Greeks continued. Xerxes gave orders for a new canal to be dug across the Chalci-

dice peninsula near Cape Athos, fearing that his fleet might be destroyed by yet another storm. Two pontoon bridges were built across the Hellespont near Abydos for moving the land forces to Europe.

The Athenians realised that the Persian threat was not a thing of the past at all. They had used the ten-year respite to build a strong fleet. Two hundred triremes, that is, ships with three tiers of oarsmen, were built. The attitude of most Greek states to the imminent war with the Persians had also changed: they were now ready for joint action against the common enemy.

In the spring of 480, Xerxes took the field at the head of a vast army. All satrapies from India to Egypt had sent their contingents. According to Herodotus, the Persian army consisted of 1.7 million infantrymen, 80,000 horse- and 20,000 camel-mounted cavalry, and an auxiliary force – a total of 5.3 million men. All modern scholars believe that that is a gross exaggeration, and that the army was not more than 100,000 strong. For those times, however, it was indeed an immense army. The Persian fleet numbered 1,200 ships.

The united forces of the Greeks had to leave the rich land of Thessaly, as it was ruled by pro-Persian aristocrats. The Greeks decided to fight in the narrow mountain gorge called Thermopylae, which was easy to defend as the Persians could not deploy their army there. But Sparta sent there only a small force of 300 warriors under king Leonidas. The entire Greek army at Thermopylae was 6,500 strong. For three days they staunchly repulsed the enemy's frontal attacks. Through a traitor, however, the Persians learnt of the existence of a roundabout route, and after that the Greeks could resist no more. Leonidas, who commanded the Greek army, ordered the main force to withdraw, while he himself, with his 300 Spartans, covered their retreat. They fought courageously until they all fell.

After that, it was impossible to defend Athens against the vast Persian army. It was therefore decided to abandon the city, to arm all men who could carry weapons, and to evacuate the rest of the population to allied Greek cities. The Persians seized, plundered and burnt down Athens.

The Greeks adopted the tactics of taking the offensive at sea and the defensive on land. The united Greek fleet stood in the bay between the city of Salamis and the Attic coast, where the great Persian

fleet could not manoeuvre. The Greek fleet consisted of 380 ships, of which 147 belonged to the Athenians and had recently been built in accordance with the latest requirements of the military art. Themistocles, a talented and resolute general, played a great role in commanding the naval force. Xerxes hoped to destroy the enemy fleet at one stroke, but not long before the battle a storm had raged for three days, and many Persian ships had been smashed on the rocky shore. On September 28, 480, the battle of Salamis was fought, which lasted for 12 hours. The Persian fleet was cramped in the narrow channel, and its ships fell foul of one another. The Greeks won a complete victory in that battle, and the greater part of the Persian fleet was destroyed. Xerxes then decided to go back to Asia Minor, leaving his general Mardonius in Thessaly with a force of about 50,000.

Mardonius proposed to conclude peace with the Athenians, and the Spartans, fearing that the proposal would be accepted, sent a strong force to Boeotia, to the city of Plataea. The forces of the other Greek cities, totalling about 50,000, also gathered there. For ten days the two sides refrained from active operations, not daring to be the first to start a decisive battle. Mardonius realised that he could only win on open ground, where he could use his cavalry. But the position of the Persian army became untenable, as the Greek force was constantly being joined by fresh contingents from the nearer and more remote cities. The Persians depended for their food supplies on local resources, which began to give out. The Greek army occupied mountain slopes, where the Persians could not deploy their cavalry. Further delay was becoming dangerous to the Persians, and Mardonius decided to engage the enemy in battle.

During the night king Alexander of Macedonia, a Persian vassal, secretly came to the Greeks' camp, desiring to win their friendship in case they should win. He informed the Greeks that the Persians would begin the battle in the morning, as they had only provisions for three days. The Hellenes thus were able to prepare to repulse the enemy.

Mardonius sent his mounted archers forward, who attacked the enemy with bows and arrows. The Persians then drove the Greeks away from the sources of water and cut off their food supply routes. When night came, the Hellenes started withdrawing towards the city of Plataea, and here the decisive

battle took place (479). Assuming that the Greeks had decided to flee, the Persians rushed after them. That was Mardonius's great error. He moved his forces against the hills where the Greeks, fearing Persian cavalry, had taken up their positions. Soon the Persians overtook the Lacedaemonians and engaged them in hand-to-hand fighting. The other Greek units did not know that the battle had been joined, and took no part in it.

At the head of 1,000 picked warriors Mardonius began to press the Lacedaemonians and killed many of them, but soon he fell together with his body-guard, and the Spartans began to gain the upper hand. Although the Persians were just as courageous as their foes, rushing at the hoplites' long spears and breaking them with bare hands, they had no heavy armour, and their military training was inferior to the Greeks'. The Persian host split into several uncoordinated detachments. In a fierce battle with the Lacedaemonians, who fought ferociously, taking no prisoners, the Persians were routed. The remnants of their force retreated and sailed for Asia Minor.

Late in the autumn of the same year 479, a major naval battle was fought off Cape Mycale (Samos Island) near the shores of Asia Minor. During the fighting the Ionians went over to their mainland brothers, and the Persians were utterly routed. That defeat became a signal for the revolt of all the Greek states in Asia Minor against Persian domination.

The Greek victories at Salamis, Plataea and Mycale made the Persians give up the idea of conquering Greece. Sparta and Athens now moved the theatre of operations to enemy territory in Asia Minor. The war continued for a long time yet, and only in 449 was the peace treaty between Persia and the Greek states concluded.

*The Decline of the Persian Empire.* In the summer of 465 B. C., Artaxerxes I, son of Xerxes, became king of Persia. In 460, the Egyptians, headed by Inaros, rose against the Persians and established their control over the Delta, while Memphis, the capital of the satrapy, and Upper Egypt remained in the hands of the Persians. The Athenians sent a fleet to aid the rebels. In the same year the Persians were defeated in the battle at Papremis. The Athenian fleet sailed up the Nile towards Memphis, where the Persian forces were concentrated. Aided by Inaros's

army, the Athenians captured Memphis, and the Persian garrison took refuge in the citadel.

Artaxerxes then sent the satrap of Syria Megabyzus, with a strong land force and the Phoenician fleet, against the insurgents and their Athenian allies. The revolt was crushed. Memphis was taken by the Persians. In 454, Inaros and other Egyptian chiefs were taken prisoner, brought to Persia and executed.

The unending uprisings of the conquered peoples and military defeats made Artaxerxes and his successors radically change their diplomacy: they began to incite some states against others, resorting to subornation. When the Peloponnesian War broke out between Sparta and Athens in 431, Persia helped now one, now the other of these states, aiming at their complete exhaustion.

In February 423 B. C., Darius II, son of Artaxerxes I, became Persian king. During his reign, the Persian satraps in Asia Minor—Tissaphernes, Pharnabazos, and Cyrus the Younger—mounted successful operations against Athens and brought many Greek cities under Persian control again. But on the whole Darius II's reign was marked by the empire's further decline, increased influence of the court aristocracy, court intrigues and conspiracies, in which queen Parysatis was very active. The Peloponnesian War enabled the Persians to concern themselves with their domestic affairs, but they failed to make full use of the respite. Between 411 and 408, there were uprisings in Asia Minor, Media, and Egypt. Besides, beginning with the late 5th century, the satraps of Asia Minor, kept fighting against one another, while the Persian kings usually did not interfere in these conflicts. The satraps often rose against the central power and, using Greek mercenaries, fought to become independent rulers.

When Darius II died in March 404, his elder son Artaxerxes II became king. At that time Cyrus the Younger, the new king's brother and satrap of several provinces in Asia Minor, began to gather a large army intending to seize the throne. He insisted that his military measures were in preparation for a war with Tissaphernes, satrap of Caria in Asia Minor. Artaxerxes believed that, since internecine conflicts between satraps had long become the order of the day. The Spartans decided to support Cyrus and helped him to hire mercenaries. Besides, Sparta formed an alliance with Egypt, where a fresh upris-

ing against the Persians was in full swing.

In 401, Cyrus led his army from Sardis to Babylon without meeting any opposition, and reached Cunaxa, 90 kilometres from Babylon. The army of Artaxerxes II also arrived there. According to Xenophon, whose *Anabasis* contains a detailed description of Cyrus's campaign, Cyrus's army consisted of 100,000 warriors, not counting 13,000 Greek mercenaries, while the army of Artaxerxes was, "according to rumour", 1,200,000 strong. Except for the number of Greek mercenaries, these figures must have been exaggerated out of all proportion. Such armies could not have been deployed on a relatively small territory or provided with the necessary food supplies.

The decisive battle took place on September 3, 401. Cyrus stepped down from his chariot, put on his armour, mounted a horse and bade his force to draw up in battle order. The Greek mercenaries stood on the flanks, while the rest of the army occupied the centre. The right flank of Artaxerxes's army was overrun by the Greek mercenaries. Cyrus's friends advised him not to risk his life, but on seeing Artaxerxes, he rushed at him, leaving his warriors far behind. He managed to wound Artaxerxes, but was immediately killed himself, and even his body was mutilated. Having lost its leader, the rebels' army was defeated.

The Spartans, who expected the Persians to go to war against them because of their assistance to Cyrus, decided to take the offensive and in 396 disembarked an army under Agesilaos in Asia Minor. While that army was fighting there, Artaxerxes's mother Parysatis kept intriguing against the enemies of the dead Cyrus, who was her favourite son, and many of them were executed under various pretexts. In 395 she accused Tissaphernes, Cyrus's worst enemy and his successor in Asia Minor, of inaction in the war against the Spartans. He was beheaded, and Persia lost its most prominent diplomat and general.

The hostilities in Asia Minor continued, but Persian gold proved more powerful than Spartan weapons. In August 394, a united Graeco-Persian fleet consisting of ships from Cyprus, Rhodes and Athens, inflicted a severe defeat on the Lacedaemonians, which put the latter out of action for ten whole years. In 386, a treaty was concluded between the Persians and the Greek states. According to that

treaty, the Persians again established their rule over the eastern coast of the Aegean and restored their control over the long lost Ionian cities.

In 362, power in Egypt passed on to the energetic pharaoh Takhos, who set himself the goal of capturing the Persian provinces of Syria and Palestine. At about that time, Cyprus also broke with the Persians; then there were uprisings in Phoenician cities and later in Asia Minor.

The year 358 saw the end of the long reign of Artaxerxes II, and Artaxerxes III mounted the throne. For a start, he exterminated all his brothers, to prevent any chance of revolt.

The new king proved to be a man of iron will; he firmly held the reins of government in his hands, banishing the eunuchs who had considerable influence at court. He vigorously tackled the task of restoring the old Persian empire. In 349, the new king led a great army against the rebellious city of Sidon, which was burned and razed to the ground; its surviving citizens were enslaved. Then came the turn of Egypt. In the winter of 343, Artaxerxes took the field against the Egyptians. The Persian command succeeded in bringing their ships up the Nile, and the Persian fleet turned up in the rear of the Egyptian army. The Greek mercenaries in the employ of the Egyptians deserted to the enemy. The country was again brought to heel, plundered and devastated.

In 337, however, Artaxerxes III's vigorous activities came to an end, as he himself was poisoned by his physician. Arses, the king's son, acceded to the throne, but in the following year also fell prey to a conspiracy. Codommanus, a member of a collateral line of the Achaemenid clan, was now put on the throne and began to rule under the name of Darius III.

While the ruling sections of Persian aristocracy were busy with intrigues and coups, a dangerous enemy appeared on the political horizon. In 336, King Philip of Macedonia sent 10,000 warriors to Asia Minor under the pretext of liberating the Greek cities from Persian rule, but in that same year he was assassinated by conspirators. Alexander, Philip's son, became king at the age of 20. Realising that a war with the Persians would require long preparation, he recalled the Macedonian force from Asia Minor.

Persia was thus given a respite of two years, but

nothing was done to repulse the imminent threat. Although the Persian command realised the advantages of Macedonian weapons, particularly of their siege equipment, it did not reorganise its army, merely increasing the contingents of Greek mercenaries.

In the spring of 334, the Macedonian army took the field. It consisted of 30,000 foot and 5,000 horse. The army was accompanied by 160 warships.

Although Darius's army was stronger in numbers, it was greatly inferior to the Macedonian troops (particularly to their heavy infantry) in fighting ability; the hardest fighters in the Persian army were Greek mercenaries. But Darius was confident of an easy victory, ordering Alexander to be captured and brought to his residence at Susa. The Persian satraps assured their king that the enemy would be destroyed in the very first battle. The only person who soberly assessed the situation and had a definite plan of strategic action was Memnon, commander of the Greek mercenaries in the Persian employ. He proposed to avoid decisive battles with the enemy and retreat, leaving a scorched land behind. Memnon also advised to transfer hostilities to Greece (which was quite possible, given the superiority of the Persian fleet) and to conclude an alliance with Alexander's enemies there. But that plan of action was rejected by the Persian satraps. Memnon's death in 333 delivered Alexander from a dangerous enemy who was probably as great a strategist as himself.

The first encounter occurred in the summer of 334 on the Hellespont coast near the river Granicus, where Alexander emerged victorious. He then captured the Greek cities of Asia Minor and advanced deep into the country. In the summer of 333, the Macedonians occupied Cilicia and thereupon moved into Syria, where the Persians' main forces were concentrated. In November 333, a new battle was fought near Issus, on the border of Cilicia and Syria. The Persians' right and the Macedonians' left flank abutted on the sea. The nucleus of the Persian army consisted of 30,000 Greek mercenaries, but Darius staked his success on the Persian cavalry, which was intended to crush the Macedonians' left flank. To reinforce that flank, Alexander concentrated his cavalry there, while he himself led his troops against the enemy right flank and routed it. However, the Greek mercenaries broke through in the centre, and Alexander hurried there with some



troops from the left flank which was left badly weakened. The fierce fighting continued, but Darius lost his head and fled without waiting for the outcome of the battle, abandoning his family which fell into enemy hands. The battle ended in a triumph for Alexander. The Phoenician cities Arad, Byblos and Sidon surrendered without resistance. The Persian fleet now lost its supremacy on the seas.

Declining Darius's plea for peace, Alexander prepared to continue the war. In the autumn of 332 he seized Egypt, then returned to Syria and headed for the locality called Gaugamela, not far from Arbela, where Darius stood with his army. The battle occurred on October 1, 331. Greek mercenaries formed the centre of Darius's army, faced by Macedonian infantry. Just as in the battle of Issus, the Persians outnumbered the Macedonians on the right flank, and succeeded in crushing their ranks there, but the decisive battle took place in the centre, where Alexander led his cavalry right into the midst of the Persian army. The Persians threw chariots and elephants into action, but Darius prematurely assumed, as he had done at Issus, that the battle had been lost, and fled. After that, only the Greek mercenaries continued to resist. Alexander won a clear victory and occupied Babylonia, and in February 330, the Macedonian army entered Susa. Later, Pasargadae and Persepolis fell into Alexander's hands. Alexander sacked these cities and burned Persepolis.

Darius escaped with his retinue to eastern Iran, where he was killed by the Bactrian satrap Bessus. The latter declared himself king, and began to rule Bactria under the name of Artaxerxes IV, but in 329 Bactria was captured by the Macedonian army, and the Persian empire ceased to exist.

*Economic Life and Social Relations in the Persian Empire.* In most areas of the Persian empire the main branch of the economy was agriculture. As new countries were conquered, the Persian kings robbed the subjugated peoples of their most fertile lands. These were handed out as large inheritable estates to members of the royal family, aristocrats, high officials, etc., who owned them absolutely and tax-free. The owners of large estates had at their disposal a staff of judges, administrators, managers, scribes, etc. Part

of the lands were the king's direct property. Persian kings also owned major canals in Babylonia, Egypt, and Transcaspian Asia, forests in Syria, as well as mines, gardens, parks and palaces in various parts of the state.

The following system of land tenure was widespread: the king assigned land to his warriors who tilled their lots collectively, in groups, and had to serve in the army and to pay taxes in money and in kind. These allotments were called the "allotments of the bow", "of the horse", "of the chariot", etc., and their owners had to serve in the army as archers, cavalrymen and charioteers.

In some parts of the Persian empire highly developed handicraft centres existed. Pottery was produced for export at Naucratis (Egypt) and Miletus (Asia Minor). Egyptian craftsmen wove thin linen, which was in high demand in the neighbouring countries. Phoenician craftsmen from Sidon, Tyre and other cities made glass, clothes and luxury wares, and the craftsmen of Babylonia, woollen clothes both for domestic consumption and for export.

There were several caravan routes in the Persian empire, connecting provinces that lay at distances of hundreds of kilometres from one another. One such route began in Lydia, crossed Asia Minor and went as far as Babylon. Another led from Babylon to Susa and then on to Persepolis and Pasargadae. Of great significance was also the caravan route connecting Babylon with Ecbatana and then running on to Bactria and the Indian borders.

After 518, Darius I ordered the 84-km canal to be restored that led from the Nile to Suez, which had existed already under pharaoh Necho but later became unfit for navigation. Highly important for the development of trading links was also the expedition of the seafarer Skylax who sailed in 518 on Darius I's orders down the river Indus for the Indian Ocean and on to the Red Sea.

Differences in terrain and climatic conditions of the various countries of the Persian empire also stimulated trade. Egypt supplied Greek cities with grain and linen, buying their wine and olive oil, and provided many provinces with gold and ivory. Lebanon exported cedar. Silver was brought from Asia Minor; copper from Cyprus; gold, ivory and incense from India; lapis lazuli, cornelian and turquoise, from Transcaspian Asia. Babylonia, like Egypt, was

a supplier of grain. International sea trade was largely in the hands of Phoenician merchants.

The administrative and financial reforms of Darius I did a great deal to consolidate the Persian empire. The implementation of these reforms took a number of years. They were begun in 519 with a reorganisation and unification of the system of provincial administration, as a result of which a new administrative system was established. Darius I divided the state into administrative and taxation districts called satrapies. The satrapies were as a rule greater than the provinces of earlier empires, and in some cases the boundaries of satrapies coincided with those of the state and ethnic constituent entities of the Persian empire (e. g., Egypt).

The new administrative districts were headed by satraps or governors. Under Cyrus and Cambyses, many countries were governed by local officials, while Darius's reforms were aimed, among other things, at concentrating the high posts in the hands of Persians, who now headed most of the satrapies. Under Cyrus and Cambyses, the satrap combined civil and military functions, while Darius restricted the power of the satrap, establishing a clear-cut division between the functions of the satraps and of the military authorities. The satraps became civil governors only, directing the administrative mechanism of the satrapy, the work of its courts and tax-collectors, enforcing law and order within the boundaries of their satrapies and controlling the local officials. In times of peace, only a small personal bodyguard was allowed them. The armies were run by military commandants who were independent of satraps and responsible directly to the king. The satraps usually also controlled hereditary vice-regents or kings, and in Asia Minor also the city communities.

The reforms resulted in the setting up of a large centralised mechanism. The central government of the state had its seat at Susa, the administrative capital of the Persian empire. Satraps and military commandants were closely linked with the central government and constantly supervised by the king and his officials. Supreme control of the whole state and supervision over all the officials was in the hands of a *hazarapatish* (literally, "head of a thousand"), who was simultaneously commander of the king's personal bodyguard. Everyone in the centre and in the provinces was under the surveillance of the "king's ears and eyes"—officials who were indepen-

dent of satraps and other local authorities, obeyed only the king and reported to him any seditious speeches or acts they might get wind of.

The official language of the offices of the Persian empire was Aramaic, but local languages were also used in the various satrapies in compiling official documents.

Persians occupied a special position in the state machinery, holding all the most important military and civil offices. However, Persian administrators also widely used the services of persons from other ethnic groups. Babylonians, Egyptians, Elamites, Greeks, etc., served as judges, city governors, managers of state arsenals, heads of royal construction projects, and so on, in Babylonia, Egypt, Asia Minor, and other regions.

Under Cyrus and Cambyses there was no firmly regulated system of taxes founded on the economic potential of the various lands of the empire. The subjugated peoples brought gifts or paid tribute, part of it in kind.

C. 519, Darius I established a new system of state taxation. All the satrapies now had to pay taxes in money strictly determined by the area and fertility of farmed land. Persians did not pay taxes in money, but they were not exempt from payments in kind. Other peoples, including the population of autonomous states (such as Phoenicians, Cilicians, etc.) paid a total of 7,740 Babylonian silver talents (232,200 kg) annually. The greater part of that sum was paid by the peoples of the economically advanced countries—Asia Minor, Babylonia, Syria, Phoenicia, and Egypt. Countries which had no mines of their own had to get silver to pay taxes by selling the products of farming and handicrafts, which stimulated the development of commodity-money relations.

The system of gifts was also preserved, but the gifts were not voluntary at all. The amount of the gifts was firmly fixed, but, unlike taxes, they were paid in kind only. The majority of the subjects paid taxes, while gifts came mostly from the peoples of the outlying areas (such as Colchis, Ethiopia, Arabia, etc.).

Darius I introduced a single monetary unit throughout the empire, which constituted the basis of the Persian monetary system—the gold daric weighing 8.4 grams. The minting of gold coin was the prerogative of the Persian king alone. For several centuries, the daric was the commercial world's

principal gold currency. The most common instrument of exchange was the silver shekel weighing 5.6 grams, which equalled one-twentieth of the daric's value. Silver coins were minted by Persian satraps in their residences and at the Greek cities of Asia Minor for paying mercenaries during military campaigns, and also by autonomous cities and dependent kings.

The price of gold in relation to that of silver in the Persian empire was 1 to 13.3. The precious metal in the state's possession could only be minted on orders from the king, and most of it remained unminted. The total amount of gold and silver in the royal treasuries towards the end of the existence of the Persian empire was not less than 235,630 talents (more than seven million kilograms).

Domestic and foreign trade, exceptionally highly developed under the Achaemenids, contributed to the exchange of cultural values as well. The peoples of the empire absorbed the achievements of their neighbours and of the more remote lands, geographical horizons were extended, and experiences in long-distance voyaging were accumulated. The East and Greece came to know each other. In an enormous empire comprising many countries and peoples, culture advanced as the isolation of various regions from the external world was breached. The old Iranian civilisation produced remarkable monuments of literature, art, and science; original religious doctrines arose in that period which made an impact on Greek thinkers, too.

*The Religion and Culture of Persia.* Zoroastrianism, a religious doctrine which emerged in Transcaspian Asia and was named after its founder Zoroaster, played a great role in the ideological life of ancient Persia.

Soon after its emergence in the first half of the 1st millennium B. C., Zoroastrianism began to spread to Media, Persia, and other Iranian countries. The priests of the Zoroastrian religion were the Magians—experts on and guardians of the cult, its rituals and rites.

The people's masses in Persia worshipped the ancient deities of nature—Mithra the sun-god, Anahita the goddess of water and fertility, and other deities personifying light, the moon, the wind, etc. Zoroastrianism found recognition in Persia late in the 6th and early in the 5th centuries B. C., i. e., in

Darius I's reign. The Persian kings realised the advantages of Zoroaster's teaching as an official religion but did not give up the cults of the ancient gods personifying the elements of nature. In the 6th century B. C. Zoroastrianism had not yet become a dogmatic religion with firmly fixed norm, and various modifications of the new religious doctrine arose. The Persian religion dating from Darius I's times was precisely such a form of early Zoroastrianism.

Since its emergence, Zoroastrianism had gone through a complex evolution. The teaching of Zoroaster himself was reflected in the Gathas, i. e., the earlier parts of the Avesta sacred books. Many of the Gathas are framed as answers of the god Ahuramazda to Zoroaster's questions. According to the Gathas, the god gave Zoroaster the mission of renovating the religion, and Zoroaster carried out the reform, announcing his faith in the final victory of Ahuramazda, rejecting some of the tribal deities, and placing others below Ahuramazda. According to Zoroaster's teaching, Ahuramazda (Greek Ormazdes) was the only omnipotent and omnipresent god of the good personifying light, life, and the truth. He was the creator of the world. From the very beginning, however, next to him stood the Evil Spirit Angra Mainyu (Ahriman) personifying darkness and death and doing evil. Ahuramazda and Angra Mainyu were in eternal conflict, Ahuramazda relying in this struggle on his assistants personifying "good sense", i. e., the idea of the good, truth, and immortality. Man was created by Ahuramazda but was free in the choice between the good and evil and thus accessible to the influence of the spirits of evil. Man must fight against Angra Mainyu in his thoughts, words and deeds. According to Zoroastrianism, life after death existed. The lot of men in the next world depended on his earthly life. If a man helped the good to triumph, his soul would go to paradise and enjoy happy life and good food, otherwise it was doomed to eternal torment in the darkness of hell.

Ancient religions were tolerant towards the beliefs of other peoples, and Persian kings patronised the cults of conquered peoples. Thus in Babylonia Cyrus extended his patronage to the local ancient cults, helping to revive them and bringing offerings to the local gods. Persian kings made sacrifices in the temples of many gods trying to win their favour. As the documents of the Persepolis archives of the late 6th

and early 5th centuries show, foodstuffs from the royal stores (wine, sheep, grain, etc.) were provided at Persepolis and other Persian and Elamite cities not only for the practice of the cult of Ahuramazda and other Iranian gods but also for those of the gods of Elam and Babylon.

The Persians and other Iranian peoples absorbed and developed many of the achievements of the Elamite, Babylonian, and Egyptian civilisations, thus enriching the treasure-house of world culture. One of the Persians' major achievements was the development of an original cuneiform script. Unlike the Akkadian script with its nearly 600 signs, the Persian system was almost alphabetic and had 40 odd signs only.

The palatial complexes at Pasargadae, Persepolis and Susa were magnificent monuments of Persian architecture. Pasargadae was situated on an extensive plain 1,900 metres above sea level. The city's buildings – the most ancient monuments of the Persian material culture – stood on a high terrace. They were faced with light fine-grained sandstone resembling marble. The royal palaces stood among parks and gardens. Probably the most remarkable of Pasargadae's monuments, fascinating in its noble beauty, is the tomb of Cyrus II which has survived to this day. Seven broad steps lead to the burial chamber two metres wide and three metres long. This tomb is ancestral to many other monuments of this kind, including the Halicarnassus Mausoleum of Caria's satrap Maussollus regarded in antiquity as one of the seven wonders of the world.

The construction of Persepolis was begun c. 520 and continued until c. 450. The city covered an area of 135,000 square metres. An artificial platform was built at the foot of a mountain. For this, about 12,000 square metres of uneven rocky surface had to be smoothed out. The city built on this platform was surrounded on three sides by a double wall of mud-brick, and on the eastern side it abutted on an inaccessible mountain rock. A wide stairway of 110 steps intended for ceremonial occasions led to the city. The official palace (*apadana*) of Darius I consisted of a great hall of 3,600 square metres surrounded by porticoes. The ceiling of the hall and of the porticoes was supported by 72 thin, elegant stone columns more than 20 metres high. The *apadana* was used for solemn state occasions. It was connected with the

private palaces of Darius I and Xerxes. Two stairways led to the *apadana*, on which reliefs of courtiers, the king's personal bodyguard, of cavalry and chariots still survive. On one side of the stairway is a long file of representatives of the 33 peoples of the empire bearing gifts and tribute to the Persian king. It is a veritable "ethnological museum", with its portrayal of the characteristic features of the various tribes.

Under Darius I, a great deal was built at Susa, too. Twelve countries, from India to Ethiopia, provided the materials for the construction of the palaces.

As the architectural monuments of the Persian kings were built and adorned by craftsmen from different countries, old Persian art presented an organic synthesis of Iranian artistic traditions and technical devices and those of Elam, Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and other lands. Despite a certain eclecticism, it has an inherent unity, being a product of definite historical conditions and of an original ideology which endowed the borrowed forms with a new meaning. Above all it was intended to symbolise the grandeur of the power of the Persian kings and their empire.

The distinguishing feature of old Persian art is a virtuoso treatment of an isolated object, usually a metal cup or vase, a cup carved out of stone, a rhyton of ivory, a piece of jewelry, etc. Of these, particularly interesting are cylindrical seals cut out of agate, chalcedony and jasper. These are covered with figures of kings and heroes fighting their enemies and fantastic creatures. Many of these seals, just as other works of old Persian art, are fascinating in their perfection of form and originality of theme.

Old Iran attracted Greek scholars and philosophers. Actually, the works of antique authors are among the principal sources of our knowledge of the history and culture of Achaemenid Iran. The old Iranian civilisation was inherited by the Middle Ages. The scholarly treatises of Iranian authors were especially highly valued in the Arabic world. Many features of the old Iranian cultural heritage have been preserved as an inseparable part of Iranian culture in later epochs. Old Iranian themes and subjects formed the basis of remarkable epics, such as the great Firdausi's *Shāhnāma*. The epic works of old Iranians are now among the most treasured possessions of world literature.

*Parthia*. C. 250 B. C., the Parni tribes which had wandered in the steppes between the Amu Darya and the Caspian, invaded the valley of the Atrek (on the territory of the modern Turkmenia in the USSR) and in 247 elected their chieftain Tiridates king. He adopted the throne name of Arshak (Arsaces). The later Parthian kings, who also adopted that name upon accession to the throne, took that year as the start of their chronology.

In founding their kingdom, the Parni challenged the Seleucid rulers of Mesopotamia and of many other countries, including Iran and Bactria. The Seleucids, preoccupied with the war against Rome and dynastic strife, could not attack the rebels at once. In 239 B. C., the Parni invaded the province of Parthyene ruled by Andragoras, a former governor of the Seleucid kings who had become independent of them as early as 245. Capturing that province, the Parni later merged with the related Parthian tribes inhabiting it.

In 232 and 231, the Seleucid ruler Seleucus II attempted to restore his power over the rebellious areas in the east of Iran and in Transcaspian Asia. But his campaign misfired, as he had to hurry back to the western provinces of his empire where unrest had broken out.

C. 171 B. C., Mithridates I became king of Parthia and made this formerly insignificant and remote kingdom a powerful empire. C. 155, the Parthians took possession of Media, and that opened a way to Mesopotamia, which Seleucid kings were unable to defend. In 141 Mithridates declared himself king of Babylonia. The Parthian kingdom now covered almost the whole of Iran, large tracts of Transcaspian Asia and the whole of Mesopotamia, and the centre of the state shifted west.

C. 137, Mithridates died. His throne was inherited by Phraates II. During his reign, nomadic tribes began to raid the eastern borders of the empire. Taking advantage of this, the Seleucid ruler Antiochus VII went to war against the Parthians in 130 and, after several victories, occupied Mesopotamia and Media. After that he stationed his army in Media, dividing it into small garrisons among various villages. Soon the Medes rose in rebellion against Antiochus, and his scattered army was unable to offer effective resistance to the rebels. Antiochus went to succour one of the beleaguered garrisons, but was attacked by Parthian cavalry. In the

ensuing battle Antiochus was killed, his son was taken captive, and the Seleucid army soundly routed.

In the meantime the nomad tribes in the east began to threaten the very existence of the Parthian empire, and c. 128 Phraates fell in an encounter with them.

Parthia reached a new peak of power under Mithridates II (123-87 B. C.), who consolidated his positions in the east and then renewed the drive against the countries lying west of the Parthian empire. That created a threat of war with Rome. In 92, Sulla, representing Rome, and the Parthian ambassador Orobases met on the Euphrates. No details of their negotiations are known, but Orobases was later accused of having failed to check Sulla's provocative escapades and executed.

In the spring of 54 B. C., the Roman general Crassus came to Syria, which had become a Roman province, and began preparations for a campaign against the Parthians. He had at his disposal 35,000 foot and 5,000 horse.

Parthia's king at the time was Orodes II. He believed that Crassus would advance across mountainous Armenia, where it would be difficult for the Parthians to deploy their first-rate cavalry. Orodes therefore led his main force to Armenia, entrusting the defence of Mesopotamia to his general Suren.

Crassus, however, confident of an easy victory, decided to beat the Parthians in Mesopotamia, not Armenia.

Suren made careful preparations for the battle. His command consisted of 10,000 mounted archers. As the Roman army approached, the Parthian cavalry began to retreat. On May 6, 53 B. C., Crassus reached the city of Carrhae, and on learning that Suren's force was not far, attacked him without a pause for his tired legionaries to rest. The Romans formed a square, and were immediately surrounded by the enemy. The Parthian horsemen loosed clouds of arrows. Crassus then ordered his son Publius to drive the enemy away with a force of 4,000 foot and horse. The Parthians began to retreat rapidly, enticing the hot-blooded and inexperienced Publius deep into the steppe, far from the main body of Roman troops, in which they succeeded. The Parthian cavalry then suddenly turned on the Roman unit and slaughtered it to a man. Upon learning of the defeat and the death of his son, Crassus moved his

force behind the walls of the city of Carrhae, but it was soon also destroyed almost completely by the Parthian cavalry.

In the meantime Orodes II concluded an alliance with the Armenian king Artavasdes and consolidated it through a dynastic marriage between his son Pacorus and an Armenian princess. At the height of the nuptial festivities, Suren's messenger brought Crassus's head and hand to the court of the Armenian king at Artaxata. At that time, Euripides's *Bacchae* was being shown at Artavasdes's court theatre, and when the head of Pentheus had to be brought on stage, the actor appeared with Crassus's head in his hands instead of the prop, greeted by delighted shouts from the audience.

The defeat of Crassus's army stopped the advance of the Romans into the Mesopotamian possessions of Parthia, and the Roman power in Asia Minor, Syria, and Palestine was shaken. By the 40s of the 1st century B. C., the Phoenician cities (with the exception of Tyre), as well as Syria and Palestine, were in Parthian hands, which created a direct threat to the Roman rule over the eastern Mediterranean regions. But the Parthians failed to consolidate their successes, unable to build an effective administrative machine in the conquered lands. Besides, the Parthians could not organise long campaigns or besiege fortified cities. The main thing was, however, that the economic potential of the Parthian empire was insufficient for a long confrontation with Rome. By 38 B. C., the Romans restored their control over Syria and Palestine. In that year, Mark Antony went on a campaign against the Parthians, but it ended in failure.

Soon, however, the Parthian empire went into a long decline. At the beginning of the 3rd century A. D., it was torn by internecine strife, hard pressed to contain the advance of the Romans in the west and the raids of the nomads in the east. It began to disintegrate into a number of independent states and in the 20s of the 3rd century A. D. collapsed completely.

We have so far little data on the inner structure of the Parthian empire. It comprised economically advanced countries of Mesopotamia and Syria as well as rather backward regions of eastern Iran and semidependent kingdoms. The king's council, consisting of Parthian tribal nobility, played an important role in ruling the state. Separate provinces were

run by satraps appointed by the king. The defence of strategically important points was in the hands of commandants bearing the title of *pitahshes*. The core of the Parthian army was cavalry.

The capital of the state was the city of Hecatompylos in eastern Iran, and after the conquests in the west, Ctesiphon in Babylonia. The city of Nisa, 18 kilometres north-west of modern Ashkhabad, where Parthian kings were entombed in their tribal sepulchres until the 1st century B. C., was of great political significance. The more ancient of its three parts, covering an area of about 18 hectares and including the citadel, stood on a rise. All that area was surrounded by a high wall with one gate. Inside the wall were the ruler's palace, the temple, administrative buildings, and army barracks. The houses of Parthian nobles and merchants, as well as handicraftsmen's blocks, adjoined that part of the city and were also surrounded by a thick wall. Beyond lay the rural zone of the city, surrounded by a mudbrick wall over seven kilometres in circuit.

A treasure-trove of ivory wares, including remarkable specimens of Parthian applied art, was found in Nisa's royal palace, in a large hall 60 by 60 metres square, by Soviet archaeologists. The treasure-trove, dated to the 2nd century B. C., mostly consists of carved rhytons with sculptured figurines of winged gryphons, centaurs and other fantastic and real animals. The rhytons are made of ivory inlaid with gold, silver and precious stones.

Many Parthian kings declared themselves to be Philhellenes. Tragedies by Greek authors were produced at their courts, and Greek was widely used in the state apparatus.

Zoroastrian priests, the Magians, played an important role in Parthia. Under king Vologeses I (c. A. D. 43-50), ancient Zoroastrian texts were collected and recorded in the Aramaic script.

By the end of the 2nd century B. C., the Great Silk Route between China and the Mediterranean became established. Parthian kings controlled a considerable part of that route, deriving large profits from the transit trade between East and West. Silk, iron, ivory, textiles, perfumes, and precious stones were carried from the East, and glass, ceramics, cloth, etc., flowed from the West.

Parthia's cultural traditions became part of the common old Central Asian civilisation, which later made a great impact on the development of culture



in Transcaspian Asia during the Middle Ages. Parthian history has been thoroughly studied by Soviet archaeologists, historians and linguists. In their works, Parthia emerges as a major centre of the ancient Orient (see also the chapter on Hellenism for further information on Parthia and Persia).

*Iran in the Sassanian Epoch.* In the early 3rd century B.C., Persis, the southern region of Iran, was divided into several small principalities, semi-dependencies of Parthia. One of the rulers there was Sassan, who gave his name to the Sassanid dynasty. A successor of Sassan, Ardashir I, began to expand his possessions at the expense of the neighbouring territories. Uniting all Persis under his rule, he also annexed the kingdoms of Kerman and Huzistan. Worried by Ardashir's successes, the Parthian king Artabanus V decided to stop him. A battle was fought in A.D. 224 in Media, in which Ardashir won a decisive victory, slaying Artabanus. In 226, Ardashir seized Ctesiphon and the neighbouring Parthian possessions in Mesopotamia. In that same year he was solemnly crowned king of Iran. Thus a new and powerful dynasty arose in the ancient homeland of the Achaemenids.

After Ardashir's death, his throne was inherited by his son Shapur I, who proved himself an outstanding strategist in the conflict with Rome over possession of Mesopotamia and Armenia. In 244, Shapur defeated the Romans on the Euphrates, where the Roman emperor Gordian fell in battle. In 260, the Romans suffered yet another defeat in the battle of Edessa in Mesopotamia, and their emperor Valerian was taken prisoner. These victories are recorded in the rock inscriptions at Naksh-i-Rustam, not far from Persepolis. Shapur is portrayed there as a triumpher, and a detailed inscription relates his military exploits.

Under Shapur I, the Sassanian state became a centralised empire and a dangerous enemy of Rome. But late in the 3rd century the Romans inflicted several defeats on the Sassanians. Later, during Shapur II's long reign (A.D. 309-379), Iran largely recovered from these setbacks.

In the first quarter of the 7th century the Sassanian empire encompassed vast territories from India and northern Afghanistan to Northern Caucasus, Syria and Arabia, and for a short while

included even Egypt. But in A.D. 637 the Sassanian army was routed by the Arabs, and soon after that the empire ceased to exist.

Under the Sassanids, Iranian society was organised on the estate principle. The free population was divided into four estates, the first three of them being privileged – the priests, the warriors and the officials. The fourth estate was made up of merchants who, unlike the first three, had to pay taxes. The estates were closed, and movement from one estate to another was impossible. The priests were headed by the supreme Magian of the Zoroastrian religion; the warrior estate, by the army commander; and the officials, by the “great scribe”. The head of the tax-payers' estate was appointed by the king precisely for the purpose of collecting taxes.

The separate provinces making up the empire were headed by governors from the ranks of the Persian aristocrats or by local kings who recognised the Sassanids' suzerainty.

Under the Sassanids, Zoroastrianism turned into a dogmatic religion with strictly regulated rites, militant and intolerant of other religions. The development of these features, mainly connected with the name of Kartir, a major statesman, was gradual. He began his career under Ardashir I, who was reported to have said that the throne was the support of the altar and the altar, the support of the throne. Under Ardashir, however, Kartir occupied the modest post of tutor of Zoroastrian priests at some temple. Later, Shapur I entrusted him with the task of reorganising Zoroastrian temples and the Zoroastrian community. Kartir rose to omnipotence under Varahran II (A.D. 276-293), when he became head of the temple of Anahita at Istakhr, the shrine of the Sassanian clan, supreme priest and supreme judge of the state. The Magians as an estate were reorganised throughout the country to conform to the demand of a single religion for the country, and to become the king's support. Kartir now laid claims to being the only interpreter of the gods' will, and Zoroastrianism became the ruling religion, the only “true faith”. In Iran itself and beyond its borders, Kartir ruthlessly persecuted Christian, Manichaean and other cults.

Four of Kartir's inscriptions have survived, in which he declares himself to be a prophet chosen by the gods. The inscriptions relate the events of his life and his reform of the state religion. In one of these

inscriptions Kartir appealed to the gods begging them to explain to him the nature of paradise and hell and to endow him with the ability to explain to men how to distinguish between a righteous man and a sinner, so that he might become even more pious. According to the other inscriptions, the gods enabled Kartir to travel to the next world to the throne of the supreme ruler Ahuramazda. Accompanied by a maid personifying the Zoroastrian faith, Kartir's soul reached the golden throne where the scales for the weighing of good and evil stood. The souls of righteous men, including that of Kartir, ate of the ritual feast and crossed the bridge called Chinvat leading to paradise. After that journey, Kartir began to preach that the souls of those who chose the righteous way would go to paradise after death, while the souls of the godless would be plunged in hell. Accordingly, righteous men would flourish during their life on earth, too, like Kartir himself. However, Kartir was not destined to die peacefully – he was apparently killed during a palace coup.

Apart from Zoroastrianism, several other religions existed in Iran. One of them was Christianity. Shapur II gave refuge to Christians pursued in the Roman empire, hoping to use their support in the struggle against his main opponent. But when Christianity was recognised as an official religion in Rome, its adherents began to be persecuted in Iran.

Manichaeism enjoyed considerable influence in Iran and the neighbouring countries. This religion was founded by Mani, born in Babylonia c. A.D. 215. In his youth, he travelled in the east for a long time, studying Buddhism, Brahmanism and other religions. Mani began to preach already under the founder of the Sassanian state Ardashir and continued to do so under Shapur I. He strove to found a universal religion that would supplant all the other religions. He insisted that his faith knew no frontiers and extended to the most remote countries and peoples.

Mani's principal dogmas were recorded in Middle Persian in Syrian script. Since Manichaeism rapidly spread from Babylonia to Central Asia, various modifications of it arose. Considerable remnants of the once extensive Manichaean literature, written in different languages, have survived. The basis of Manichaeism, just as of Zoroastrianism, was the dualist doctrine of the struggle between good and evil, between the forces of light and darkness. Man

was obliged to fight evil actively and to lead a righteous life.

Christians were hostile to that religion, as is attested by their extensive polemic literature against Manichaeism. The latter presented a considerable threat to Christianity, rapidly spreading among the masses due to the simplicity of its precepts.

At first, the Sassanids did not interfere with the spreading of Manichaeism and sometimes even supported Mani himself. Thus in 240, on the day of his coronation, Shapur received the young prophet, who was then only 25. But when the popular masses rose under Manichaean slogans against the foundations of the state, they were subjected to severe reprisals. Mani himself was thrown into gaol, where he died of terrible torture in 277.

In the later period of the existence of the Sassanian state, popular uprisings became frequent. In the late 5th century, there was a major revolt by broad sections of the city poor and of peasants led by Mazdak. If we are to accept the evidence of later sources, Mazdak advocated the distribution of property between men; he said that no people should go hungry or poor, as all men were equal. The same sources insist that during the revolt the ordinary people "became brutalised", and that slaves rose against their masters. The revolt lasted for 30 years and was severely suppressed.

The art of Sassanian Iran is characterised above all by the portrayal of official personages. Some of the monuments of this genre are colossal rock reliefs portraying kings, their magnates and bodyguard. The art of toreutics was particularly advanced. A good sample of it is a silver dish with a picture of king Shapur II hunting lions. The king is galloping at a lion, his bow taut, while nearby another lion, already dead, is lying. The technique employed in the making of these objects was as follows: an outline was stamped on the reverse side of a plate, and then the obverse side was worked on with special instruments. After that the plate was inserted in a silver dish, with the plate's ends bent round the edges of the dish.

A fairly well-developed theory of music existed in Sassanian times. Of the musical instruments particularly popular were the flute, the *chang* (a kind of harp), the lute, etc. Noblemen's children studied reading, writing, counting, riding, playing *nard* (a game ancestral to chess) and the art of using arms.

Mathematics, astronomy and law were well advanced in Sassanian Iran. Links with the neighbouring countries were consolidated; thus, some literary works came to Iran from India and were translated into Pahlavi; later they became known in the Arabic world and in Byzantium and forming part of world literature. Manichaeism was strongly influenced by Buddhism.

Despite the continual conflict with Rome, the antique world learnt a great deal about Iranian culture under the Sassanids, while ancient Iranians

absorbed the rich traditions of Graeco-Roman culture. During the crisis of the Roman empire, interest for the Iranian religion grew among antique philosophers, who studied the doctrines of the Magians; the cult of the god Mithra was worshipped in various regions of the enormous Roman empire.

In Iran, just as in the other countries of the ancient world, the encounter between the Eastern and Western civilisations facilitated a cultural rapprochement and the creation of common cultural values in different areas of knowledge.

## Chapter 8

### *Western Central Asia in Antiquity*

For a long time the history of Central Asia was mostly known from brief accounts in the works of historians and geographers of the Graeco-Roman world. The true discovery of the ancient civilisations of Central Asia came through the studies of Soviet archaeologists which have been conducted on a large scale in the Central Asian republics since the 1930s. These excavations have yielded monumental palaces and temples, first-class art monuments, and ancient archives—the Parthian one at Nisa near Ashkhabad and the Khorezmian at Toprak-kale on the right bank of the Amu Darya north-east of Khiva. The study of all these materials, which still continues, has shown some profound differences between the type of culture, settlements, and the esthetic canons of these ancient civilisations from those of the local medieval societies which began to develop here in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. In the view of Soviet scholars, these differences are closely linked with the qualitatively different nature of the socioeconomic relations which existed in ancient Transcaspian Asia. Prof. S. P. Tolstov was the first to formulate this thesis, relying mostly on the materials from ancient Khorezm. According to his hypothesis a local variety of slave-owning society of the early Oriental type existed here in ancient times. New materials obtained in subsequent work bear out this view, although the scarcity of local data, especially of economic archives, makes it difficult to characterise in detail the specificity of the local culture.

Sharp contrasts are the outstanding feature of the natural conditions of Central Asia. Desert-and-steppe landscapes, notably the Kara Kum and

Kyzyl Kum deserts, adjoin fertile oases irrigated by two major rivers, the Amu Darya and the Syr Darya, and a number of their tributaries and less significant rivers. The high mountain-masses of Tien Shan and Pamir also form distinctive landscapes. Here, cultures differing in external traits and economic modes developed under varied ecological conditions. The interaction of diverse cultures is one of the marks of the country's ancient history, as are the long and close links with the ancient sources of civilisation of the Orient, in the first place with the Near East.

These features were clearly manifested already at the ancient stages of the history of the tribes and peoples in this region. In the 6th millennium B. C., the Jeitun Neolithic culture evolved in the south-west of Central Asia on the narrow foothill plain between the Kopet-dag Ridge and the Kara Kum desert. Jeitun tribes led a settled life, grew wheat and barley and raised livestock. With advances in farming and livestock-breeding, the standard of living and culture of these tribes rose. Jeitun settlements consisted of solid mudbrick houses. A large building—the communal shrine with fresco-covered walls—was the focus of such a settlement. Some features of construction techniques, of pottery covered with simple designs, and some others, point to close links with the settled peasant cultures of Iran and Mesopotamia, particularly with the Jarmo culture.

In the 5th and 4th millennia B. C., these agricultural communities made further progress. They began to smelt copper and raise cattle and later camels; moving east, they settled the delta of a fairly large river, the Tedjend-Gerirud. Ditches were dug

to irrigate the fields, and that formed the beginning of irrigation farming yielding high and stable crops.

As a result of these economic and cultural developments, the first cities and of an early-urban civilisation arose in south-west Central Asia. Its best-known monument is Altin-depe. The Altin-depe civilisation, which dates to 2300-1900 B. C., has all the features of the highly developed cultures of the ancient Orient. Its centres were two urban settlements—Altin-depe and Namazga-tepe surrounded by walls of mudbrick, the gates leading into the city framed by monumental towers or pylons following the model of similar constructions of ancient Mesopotamia. The focus of Altin-depe was the monumental cultic complex with a four-step tower, obviously imitating the stepped ziggurats of Sumer and Babylonia. The cultic complex included numerous storehouses, the supreme priest's house, and the tomb of the priestly community. Among other things, a gold bull's head was found here with a crescent-shaped insert in the forehead made of turquoise. The entire temple complex was dedicated to the astral moon-god who is often described in Mesopotamian mythology as a flame-coloured bull. Another line of cultural links leads from Transcaspian Asia to the Indus valley—the seat of the Harappa civilisation. Harappa ivory objects have been found at Altin-depe among the things placed in rich tombs and in walled-in treasure-troves. Seals of the Harappa type have also been discovered here, including one bearing two signs of proto-Indian writing.

The urban population of the Altin-depe civilisation clearly falls into three groups differing in the level of well-being, the character of the houses, and even in their food. The ordinary commoners, the craftsmen and farmers, lived in houses consisting of numerous tiny rooms; only a few bits of pottery have been found in the tombs adjoining them, while half the meat they ate was that of wild animals. The houses of the nobler members of the community were more imposing, and their tombs contain necklaces of semi-precious stones, silver and bronze rings and seals. The social and economic differentiation was most marked in the third group of the population—chieftains and priests. Their large dwellings were well laid out and occupied areas of 80 to 100 square metres. The tombs in the "aristocratic quarters" contain various ornaments, including objects of silver and gold, as well as imported ones of

ivory. The measurements of the skeletons show that members of the urban elite were even taller than ordinary citizens—another sign of a well-fed, easy life. The more prominent noblemen may have used the labour of slaves, whose burials, without any funerary objects, sometimes lie next to the rich tombs. A society of equal farmers was thus replaced by a social system based on inequality, and an early class society gradually took shape.

In the mid-2nd millennium B. C., the urban settlements of that most ancient civilisation of Transcaspian Asia declined, and the principal centres of development moved east, to the delta of the Murgab, and the middle Amu Darya area where new farming oases sprang up. The oases in the Murgab delta centred round large urban-type fortified settlements. Several fortified settlements of ancient communities have been excavated in the middle reaches of the Amu Darya, but no major towns have been discovered. All the settlements had walls and towers, and bronze weapons became widespread. We observe all the earmarks of an epoch of wars and conflicts. Judging by their culture, the population of these oases seem to be direct descendants of the founders of the Altin-depe civilisation, although some new cultural features are also observed, including flat stone seals portraying, with considerable skill, dramatic scenes of fighting between bulls and dragons, serpents attacking tigers, a mythological hero conquering wild beasts. Some of these themes point to increasing links with Mesopotamia and Elam. By the 1st millennium B. C., the whole of southern Central Asia was dominated by a highly developed culture of the ancient Oriental type, and new centres arose in the areas which in the 1st millennium B. C. were named Margiana (the Murgab basin) and Bactria (the middle course of the Amu Darya).

Simultaneously with the emergence of new oases in the south of Central Asia, the northern steppes were settled by cattle-raising tribes. Herds of cattle were their principal wealth, and horse-drawn chariots were widely used for transportation. Some features of this culture are reminiscent of the monuments of the steppe dwellers of the modern Volga area and western Kazakhstan. Many researchers believe that the spreading in Central Asia of the peoples of the Indo-Iranian language branch, who called themselves Aryans, is linked with the pene-

tration of the steppe tribes. Wheels and swastikas, formed of stones laid end to end, which played a great role in the cultic notions of the old Indian tribes, have been found in the burials of the steppe pastoral peoples. As they settled here, Indo-Iranian tribes came into contact with the local population and mixed with it, so that the language of some of the population of the settled oases probably became Iranised.

These distinctive conditions of interaction between northern nomads and southern sedentary farmers formed the background for an intense process of the development of class relations and the formation of the state. Technical progress was primarily marked by the introduction of iron. In the 10th through 7th centuries B. C., iron tools and weapons appeared in southern Central Asia, and beginning with the 6th-4th centuries B. C., iron objects became widespread throughout this territory. Iron spades, axes and sickles largely facilitated a further rise in land cultivation. Complex irrigation systems were built in the south-eastern Caspian area and in the Murgab delta. Large settlements with citadels on mighty mudbrick platforms formed the centres of irrigated oases, with monumental palaces of rulers inside the citadels. A typical settlement of this type is Yaz-depe in the Murgab delta—the Margiana of antiquity.

Related cultures existed on the territory of Bactria and, as latest studies have shown, in the Zeravshan and Kashkadarya valleys, i. e., on the territory called Sogd in ancient times. Indications are that most of the population of Central Asia was by that time entirely Iranian-speaking, both the oases-dwellers and the tribes of horsemen living in the vast open spaces of the steppes, whose sudden raids often terrorised the former. Economic development, accumulation of wealth, and the growing gap between the rich and the poor stimulated the tendency towards the creation of larger political units.

The epico-heroic tradition of the East Iranian tribes, partially surviving in the Avesta, throws light on some aspects of that process. An ancient hymn dedicated to the god Mithra mentions "the ruler of all rulers"—apparently a chieftain who headed, for a time at least, several oases. The text goes on to describe Mithra himself riding a fast steed and looking down from high mountains on the fertile "Aryan land"—Sogd, Margiana, Khorezm (a region in the

lower Amu Darya) and some areas on the territory of modern Afghanistan. This is probably a description of a temporary political union, a military confederation of tribal unions. True, the power of the petty kings heading such confederations was restricted by the "council of first men", but the tendency towards establishing a stable state with a strong authority was universal.

This was the historical background for the activities of Zarathustra or Zoroaster, founder of the new religion of Zoroastrianism. The recurrent theme of Zoroastrianism is the idea of an eternal struggle between good and evil, between truth and falsehood. The good and positive principle is personified by Ahuramazda (Ormuzd), his antipode is Angro Mainyu (Ahriman or Ariman).

Zoroaster is believed to have lived and preached in the 7th century B. C. He seems to have begun preaching at the court of an east Iranian king, Vish-taspa, who ruled Drangiana, an area in the south-west of modern Afghanistan. The internecine strife between the rulers of several countries seems to have ended in a success for Bactria, a "fine land with its banners raised high", according to the Avesta. The antique tradition has preserved the legend of a once powerful Bactrian kingdom where Zoroaster himself is said to have ruled.

Soon Central Asia formed part of the Achaemenid empire. When the Achaemenids attempted to annex the new lands here, they ran into fierce opposition from a powerful union of nomadic tribes called the Massagetae by the antique sources. Cyrus II, the founder of the Achaemenid empire, fell in 530 B. C. in a battle with the Massagetae headed by their queen Tomyris. In the end, the areas where the nomads lived remained largely independent, but most of the settled oases were included in the new state's satrapies. The Bactrian satrapy, presumably one of the most important, was often governed by a member of the ruling dynasty. The satrapies paid the central government taxes and sent military contingents to the Persian army, and the local nobility helped to collect the taxes and levy the troops, which accelerated the growth of social differentiation and class conflicts in society. When Darius acceded to the throne in 522 B. C., revolts and separatist movements enveloped almost the whole of the Achaemenid empire, including the Transcaspian satrapies. The fighting was particularly fierce in Margiana,



where the Margianans lost 55,000 dead and 6,500 prisoners in one battle. Although these figures are most likely exaggerated, there can be little doubt but that the revolt in Margiana was a mass popular movement.

After the dramatic events of the first years of membership in the Achaemenid empire, the 5th century saw the beginning of a period of relative calm in the eastern satrapies. Cities developed, particularly Marakanda, the capital of Sogdiana which lay in the valley of the Zeravshan on the site of modern Samarkand. Various crafts flourished, and regular trade routes between different countries became established, for the protection of which the Achaemenid government showed special zeal. One of such routes led across Bactria to India. Bactria may have begun to mint its own coin. Local traditions, going back to the Altin-depe civilisation, remained the basis of the culture of settled oases, but they were enriched by stronger contacts with other countries. Coins from Greek cities, including Athens, reached the local markets at that time, as Greek objects of art probably did, too. The local rulers built monumental palaces following the canons of the imperial capital Persepolis.

After a prolonged Graeco-Persian confrontation, the declining Achaemenid empire was shattered by Alexander the Great's army. But the lucky conqueror had to fight hard to keep his hold over the vast territories he had seized, and his greatest difficulties were in Central Asia. Bessus, the last Achaemenid satrap of Bactria, hurried to declare himself "king of Asia", and tried to organise a new state on the basis of the eastern satrapies, but things did not even come to a military encounter here. Hearing of the approach of a Graeco-Macedonian force, Bessus fled but was soon handed over to Alexander by his own confederates. However, Graeco-Macedonians ran into serious resistance at Sogd, where repeated revolts led by Spitamenes, an energetic Sogdian nobleman, shook the country for nearly three years (329-327 B. C.).

Alexander's policy of achieving a rapprochement between the Hellenic and Oriental parts of his vast empire was implemented in Central Asia. He began to include Sogdian and Bactrian contingents in his army, and his marriage to Roxana, daughter of the noble Bactrian Oxiartes, was both a romantic and a political act. Vigorous construction was begun;

cities were founded in Bactria, Sogd and Parthia (areas of modern southern Turkmenistan and north-eastern Iran) which were called Alexandrias.

After the death of Alexander the Great, Central Asia became part of one of the states that arose on the ruins of the new empire which never got on its feet. That state was the new empire of the Seleucids, of which the centre was Babylon and which extended its rule to Bactria c. 305 B. C. Following in Alexander's footsteps, the Seleucids tried to gain support among the upper strata of the population of the conquered countries, stimulating the development of local economy and culture.

In the Seleucids' eastern possessions the chief proponent of that policy was Antiochus I, the son of the empire's founder Seleucus. In 289 B. C. he was appointed joint ruler with his father and was given the satrapies east of the Euphrates. Antiochus took vigorous measures to restore the economy. He rebuilt the capital of Margiana, which was named Antiochia of Margiana, and the entire oasis was surrounded by a wall 250 kilometres long to protect it against the nomads' raids. Other cities and settlements were also fortified or built anew, and the influx of colonists begun under Alexander continued. Silver coins were minted in Bactria under Antiochus which followed the Greek weight standard and the local face-values. After several decades of tribulations, a period of relative stability came to Central Asia. At the same time, political authority was just as alien to the majority of the local population as under the Achaemenids and Alexander. The tendency towards political independence became stronger with the rise of the local economy. The Seleucids, too, mostly saw their eastern satrapies merely as a source of money and military contingents for their wars in the west. A combination of diverse interests and aspirations gradually led to the formation of independent states in Central Asia.

C. 250 B. C., the Bactrian satrap Diodotus declared himself an independent ruler. Nearly simultaneously, Parthia broke with the Seleucids, too. The new historical period of independent existence of Central Asian states began. There were three major states of this kind: Parthia, which arose as an independent state in the south-west of Central Asia but soon became a world empire with its principal centres far in the west, in Iran and Mesopotamia; the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, a kind of Hellenist

outpost in the east; and the Kushan empire, powerful and very little studied so far yet fascinating in its unusual richness and diversity of monuments of culture and art.

Graeco-Bactria occupied a special position among these states. Its policy, history and culture manifested especially clearly the fusion and creative interaction between the Hellenic and Oriental principles which ultimately created the unique aura of Hellenism. Graeco-Bactria's political history abounds in dynamic events. Its first ruler Diodotus endeavoured to create dynastic traditions, and called his son Diodotus as well. But c. 230 B.C., Diodotus II was deposed and assassinated, along with his whole family, by Euthydemus. The Seleucid ruler Antiochus III was at the time making desperate efforts to restore the former might of the empire. During his campaign in the east, he spent two years on a futile siege of the city of Bactria, the capital of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom, and had to be satisfied with a treaty of cooperation. Euthydemus's son Demetrius crossed the Hindu Kush and conquered some provinces of the Indian kingdom of Maurya. The lucky ruler had coins stamped with a portrait of himself wearing a ceremonial helmet in the shape of an elephant's head. Sensitive to the feelings of his new subjects, he put Indian inscriptions along with the Greek ones on the coins. But the situation in Bactria itself was not stable, and c. 171, when Demetrius was still in India, power in the metropolis was seized by Eucratides, presumably one of the generals. The latter seems to have been active on many fronts, fighting, among other enemies, Parthia on his western frontiers, which was then gathering strength, but in the end he was defeated. C. 155, he was killed by his son Heliocles, as he returned from one of his campaigns. The new usurper was the last major ruler of Graeco-Bactria, and his rule did not last long at that. Between 140 and 130 B.C., nomadic tribes invading from the north put an end to Graeco-Bactria as a major power.

This kaleidoscope of coups and conspiracies should not eclipse certain more fundamental processes. The Graeco-Bactrian period was marked by intense city building. Abundance of Graeco-Bactrian coins points to well-developed trade. It was in the Graeco-Bactrian period that Bactria, formerly a rich agricultural area with isolated urban centres, became a country of advanced trade and crafts.

At the same time it was an important stage in the development of Bactrian civilisation. Hellenic culture made a strong impact on the original substratum of the ancient local traditions. The role of Greek culture and language were particularly great in Bactria. Significantly, the Indian ruler Ashoka, who temporarily established his rule over some regions south of Hindu Kush, inscribed an edict on the rocks addressed to the local population in which two kinds of script were used – Aramaic, employed in Achaemenid offices, and Greek, introduced by Alexander and the Seleucids. On the right bank of the Amu Darya, at the mouth of its tributary Kunduz, excavations at the Ai Khanoum site have revealed the ruins of a city founded by Greek colonists. In antiquity the city was apparently called Alexandria Oxiana, from Oxus, the ancient name of the Amu Darya. There is no doubt about the Hellenic nature of the city. There was a gymnasium here, and inscriptions were found in it dedicated to Hermes and Heracles. A peristyle court has been excavated in the administrative centre, the four porticoes of which had 116 stone columns with capitals in a style close to the Corinthian order. The inscriptions found by the archaeologists include copies of Delphian aphorisms. But there is also evidence of interpenetration of the cultural traditions. Thus the mighty mudbrick walls of the fortress are obviously a development of the local monumental architecture. The buildings of the administrative centre include an 18-column hall built in the traditions of the Achaemenid palatial architecture. Apart from marble sculpture, there were also statues at Ai Khanoum made of gypsum and clay. Clay sculpture is a purely Oriental feature, not a Greek one. The interaction of the two cultures was a characteristic feature of Bactria in the 3rd and 2nd centuries B.C., although the two traditions often developed along parallel lines. The coins of Graeco-Bactrian kings were remarkable specimens of the art of medal-making.

Parthia existed much longer as an independent state than the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. Parthia's independence from the Seleucids was originally proclaimed, as in Bactria, by the local satrap, whose name was Andragoras. But soon the country was overrun by the neighbouring nomadic tribes, whose ruler Arsaces assumed the title of king in 247. The subsequent rulers of Parthia adopted Arsaces as one of their throne names. Originally, the new state was

not large, including, apart from Parthia proper, the neighbouring Hyrcania (a region adjoining the south-eastern Caspian). However, under Mithridates I (c. 171-138 B.C.) Parthia began vigorously expanding towards the west as far as Mesopotamia, ultimately becoming a major world power. The Parthian period in the history of Iran and Mesopotamia is one of its more striking chapters. The ancient homeland in the north-east of the Parthian empire was now only one of its important centres.

The powerful movement of nomadic tribes which had brought down Graeco-Bactria also affected Parthia's eastern regions. Two Parthian kings fell in the hard struggle against the nomads; only under Mithridates II (123-87 B.C.) was that constant threat localised, and a special province set aside for the invading tribes which was called Sakastan (modern Seistan). In the long-drawn-out confrontation with Rome, Parthia often suffered military and political defeats at the hands of this strong and highly experienced rival, who also claimed supremacy in the Near East. After prolonged internecine strife, Artabanus III, a member of the so-called younger Arsacid dynasty, came to power in Parthia in A.D. 11, supported by the nomadic tribes of its deep-lying regions.

At the end of the 1st and the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., Parthian empire went into a decline—a process paralleled by the growing independence of the various provinces headed by the members of the numerous Arsacid clan or other noble Parthian families. Hyrcania also showed a tendency towards separatism, sending its ambassadors directly to Rome. A dynasty in its own right asserted itself in Margiana; its first king Sanabares called himself by the same title as the ruling Arsacid, i. e., “the king of kings”. The power of the Margianan ruler may have extended to Parthyene, or Parthia proper, where coins of Margianan minting are often found. Some sources also report that in the west Margiana bordered on Hyrcania, so that the lands of Parthyene must have been under the rule of the Margianan “king of kings”. This semi-independence of the eastern Parthian provinces apparently continued until the fall of Arsacid Parthia in the 220s, when it was shattered by Ardashir, the founder of a new and powerful Sassanid dynasty.

The Parthian period in south-western Central Asia was marked by the development of urban life

and the rise of handicrafts and money circulation. In Parthyene itself, the best-known city was Nisa, whose ruins lie not far from modern Ashkhabad. The royal palace and the tombs of the elder Arsacids lay next to the city proper. Intense economic development made an impact on the social relations, too. Slave labour played a great role in the economy. According to law children of slaves remained slaves. The position of ordinary commoners, who paid high taxes to the state, was hard, too. Cultivation of land by commoners was regarded as a duty to the state and was strictly controlled. The system of government required a smooth working of the administrative and fiscal machinery. As shown by the numerous economic records found in the Nisa excavations, detailed records were kept of the payments in kind coming from the commoners' lands and temple and royal estates. Each record indicated the year when the supplies came and the name of the official in charge.

Cultural achievements were especially significant. In Parthia, just as in neighbouring Bactria, the traditions of the local civilisation of the early Oriental type blended with Hellenic cultural features. Thus two cultural traditions can clearly be traced in the royal residence in the area of Nisa which was called in antiquity Mithridatekert (“built by Mithridates”; now the Old Nisa site). The monumental mudbrick architecture, the heavy ground plans of the square ceremonial halls, the Zoroastrian names in the documents of the palace archives and the Zoroastrian calendar point to the deep-lying local roots of this culture. The records are kept in Parthian, in an Aramaic script, which became widespread in the Achaemenid epoch, adapted to the Parthian language; the records directly borrow clichés from the bureaucratism of that preceding period. At the same time, the architectural decor widely uses the splendid capitals of the Corinthian order decorated with an acanthus leaves design, and marble statues in the best traditions of Hellenistic sculpture are carefully preserved in the royal treasure-house. Originally, the inscriptions on the coins minted in Parthia were also in Greek only. Evidence of the synthesis of these two cultural traditions is also found in the large ivory drinking horns or rhytons discovered at Mithridatekert. The form of these vessels is traditionally Oriental but some motifs of ornamentation are undoubtedly Greek, including those on the

friezes portraying twelve Olympian deities and Artemis the Huntress. After the beginning of the Christian era a kind of Oriental reaction to Hellenism set in, and the properly Parthian, Oriental canons asserted themselves, while Greek motifs appeared in modified form. Parthian inscriptions on coins, gradually ousted Greek ones, the latter becoming more and more indistinct and distorted.

Similar changes took place at nearly the same time in the culture of Bactria, where the Kushan kingdom was coming into being. Originally, the core of the Kushan state was Bactria. Graeco-Bactria was supplanted by small political unions, including possessions of the nomadic chieftains who had brought down the power of the Graeco-Bactrian kings. These nomads rather rapidly assimilated the traditions of a settled culture, showing themselves to be industrious and intelligent workers. In the 1st century B.C., they built new canals and cities, creating whole farming oases. Soon one of their chieftains, named Heraius, had his image as an armed horseman stamped on the large silver coins of the realm accompanied by an inscription in Greek, the whole symbolising, as it were, the link between the nomadic traditions and the Hellenistic state. Even more interesting is the fact that he calls himself a "Kushan". Further growth of Heraius's small possession ultimately led to the creation of the enormous Kushan empire.

Its founder was Kadphizes I, who established his rule over four small principalities of nomadic tribes on Bactrian territory, first pushing back and then conquering the last Greek dynasts. As a result, the whole of Bactria was united under a single ruler, who adopted the magnificent title of "the king of kings". These events assumedly happened in the 1st century A.D. The new empire expanded along the traditional route south beyond the Hindu Kush passes, where Kadphizes I asserted his dominion over several provinces. The minting of coins with Indian inscriptions shows that lands with Indian population now formed part of his possessions. Under Kadphizes I, Bactria formed the core of the Kushan empire, of which Bactria was most likely the capital. Kushan territory was further expanded under Kadphizes II, son and successor of the founder of the state, who annexed a large part of north-western India.

The best known among Kushan rulers was

Kanishka, but there is little agreement among researchers on the time of his reign. The most likely period is the first third of the 2nd century A.D. Under Kanishka, the centre of the Kushan empire definitely moved towards the Indian possessions, and Purushapura (modern Peshawar) became its capital.

Since Kushan possessions bordered on Parthia in the west and Han China in the east, military conflicts with these states were not infrequent. Before the emergence of the Kushan state, Parthian presence in Bactria was considerable, as was reflected in the spreading of Parthian coins and in cultural influences. But later the relations on the western borders of Kushana were stabilised and remained so during several centuries. Late in the 1st and early 2nd century A.D., there was some hard fighting in eastern Turkistan, where the Kushan army stopped the Han expansion.

Later, the Kushan kingdom suffered a defeat in the conflict with the Sassanian state which replaced Parthia. Especially important were the events of the mid-4th century A.D., when the Sassanian troops invaded the territory of Bactria, and Sassanian governors in the east adopted the titles of "the king of the Kushan" and even "the great king of the Kushans". That was the end of a once great empire. Some of the Kushan possessions remained independent, and at the end of the 4th and beginning of the 5th centuries they even had a period of resurgence, when cities were rebuilt, dilapidated fortifications repaired, and palaces erected. But the unified Kushan state, whose territory once stretched from the Ganges to the Amu Darya, no longer existed. Presently, incursions of nomadic tribes and new pressure from the Sassanids resulted in the downfall of the late Kushan rulers, too.

The Kushans inherited Bactria's well-developed agriculture based on artificial irrigation, with its attendant high population density. Intense development of trade and crafts facilitated a further rise in urban life. The role of money relations in trade kept growing, as shown by hundreds of Kushan small copper coins used in retail trading, found in abundance in the excavations of both major centres and small settlements. New cities emerged and the old centres expanded. There are grounds to believe that a considerable proportion of Bactria's inhabitants lived in urban-type settlements. Particularly inter-

esting are cities built on the rectangular plan under the aegis of central authority, such as Zar-tepe and Dalverzin in northern Bactria and Begram and Dylberdj in the southern part of it. They offer evidence of clearcut town-building and fortification canons.

Kushan cities, both large and small, old and newly built, formed a whole system, being linked by roads and caravan routes. Commercial links with the Roman empire, and in particular with its eastern provinces, figured especially prominently in trade relations. The trade was conducted along land and sea routes; the latter began in the western ports of Hindustan. The land route led north across the Ferghana valley to China. The commodities travelling along these trading routes were numerous and varied. Spices, perfumes, precious stones, ivory, and sugar were carried to Rome. Of particular importance was trade in rice and cotton wares. Silk, leather and other goods were in transit from China. The greatest international trade artery of those times was sometimes even called "the great silk route". Textiles and clothes suited to the local tastes, glassware and jewelry, statues and wines were brought from Rome. Gold and silver Roman coins came to the local markets in large numbers and often occur in the treasure-troves found on the territory of the Kushan empire.

Probably the most significant achievement of the Kushan times was high level of culture. Kushan culture, with all its variation of time and place, was a creative blend of the achievements of the local civilisation of the ancient Oriental type, the life-giving principles of Hellenism, the sophistication of Indian art, and the dashing style contributed by the nomadic tribes from the Asian steppes. The initial stage of that syncretic Kushan art is well represented by the materials from noblemen's burials discovered by Soviet archaeologists on the Tillya-tepe site in southern Bactria. The bodies were entombed in rich clothes adorned in gold designs. Stamped and cast gold buckles, plates, dagger sheaths, and pendants were profusely ornamented with insets of pearl, turquoise, and lapis lazuli. There are traces here of several artistic traditions which affected early Kushan culture. Thus the motifs and the manner of execution of scenes of fighting animals rolled into a single tangle, the tense and expressive figures of animals, and the winged dragons—all this leads us into

the world of the nomadic Asian tribes' artistic culture and is close to the works of Sarmatian art. Another group of themes represents the purely antique line, as, for instance, the figure of a warrior in ceremonial armour of the Macedonian type, a woman riding a lion, or a jolly Silenus with a rhyton in his hands. Many of the complex groups and scenes have not been properly interpreted so far. Presumably they reproduce local Bactrian themes combined with Hellenistic and Indian influences. From the evidence of the coins, the burials may be dated to the 1st century B. C. or the first half of the 1st century A. D. We have here an early stage of cultural integration, in which the sources of the remarkable Kushan culture lie. Kushan cities became the carriers of the new cultural standards represented by stable assemblages ranging from everyday utensils to cultic objects. This urbanised culture and money relations also penetrated into rural areas.

During the Kushan period, Buddhism became widespread, and its monuments are found in all the corners of the vast empire. As a rule, they are generously decorated with sculptures, reliefs and paintings. A Buddhist cave monastery is situated at Kara-tepe near Termez, which was the capital of northern Bactria. A number of buildings on the surface and cave cells were located here. Fajas-tepe, another monastery in the neighbourhood of Termez, is built entirely on the ground. Its focus is a court with cells and chapels at the sides and a hall for general meetings in the centre. Fajas-tepe is abundantly ornamented with painted clay sculpture and pictures, in which the figures of the donators show obvious influences of the Hellenistic psychological portrait. A Buddhist shrine containing gypsum sculpture has been discovered in the suburb of Dalverzin. The ruins of a stupa, another type of Buddhist monuments, have also been discovered on the territory of Bactria. These are monumental dome-shaped buildings of mudbrick. Of considerable interest are inscriptions in the Brahmi and Kharoshthi script discovered at Kara-tepe and Fajas-tepe. They are written in Prakrit or the Middle Indian language. Soviet scholars and the Hungarian scientist J. Harmaua have shown that the names of various Buddhist schools occur in the inscriptions. Borrowed from India, Buddhism assumed original forms in Central Asia, where Indian Buddhist traditions were combined with local ones, as can be seen from the sculp-

ture and architecture of the monasteries, and from bilingual inscriptions in Bactrian and Indian.

Patronising Buddhism, Kushan rulers endeavoured at the same time to assert the authority of secular power. The Surkh-kotal shrines in northern Afghanistan, south of Puli-humri, are monuments of such a dynastic cult. The main temple with its fire altar stood on a high hill fortified by a wall, with a long staircase leading up to them. An inscription found here gives the name of the whole complex – the Temple of Kanishka the Victorious. The early Kushan palace at Khalchayan in northern Bactria also represents a dynastic cult. A sculptured frieze reproduces heroicised images of noble personages, apparently members of the local ruling dynasty. Some of the sculptures obviously convey individualised features, but not the inner world of the person portrayed.

Along with official cults and religions, there were mass popular beliefs in the Kushan kingdom. Numerous terracotta figurines found both in the cities and in rural settlements are linked with these popular beliefs. There are not many Buddhist effigies among them. The most favourite subjects were female deities wearing clothes falling in heavy folds and holding a cult vessel or sacred fruit. They are most likely some version of the female patroness of fertility and of the home hearth. That must be the reason why such figurines occur in each house. Another type of objects of mass popular culture is terracotta figurines of horsemen or just saddled horses – reminders of the founders of the Kushan empire and symbol of its principal armed force. Kushan cultural standards exerted a significant influence on the neighbouring countries and peoples.

In particular, this influence is observed in Sogdiana, yet another important region of ancient Central Asia, which included fertile oases in the valleys of the Kashkadarya and Zeravshan. It appears that Sogdiana was included in the Seleucids' empire and the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. Citadel walls and other structures of that time have been discovered on the site of its capital Marakanda (whose ruins, known as Afrasiab, lie on the outskirts of modern Samarkand). Its culture, pottery included, is marked by the influence of Greek models; there is a Greek inscription on one of the cups found here.

Sogdiana seems to have fallen under the rule of nomadic tribes even earlier than Bactria. Several

rulers on its territory minted coins imitating those of the Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. In the 1st century B. C., inscriptions on coins began to be made in Aramaic script adapted to the Sogdian language. It is difficult to say just how great was the power of the rulers who struck these coins, but at least one of them proudly called himself "the king of kings". In the first centuries A. D. the culture of Sogdiana was affected by the Kushan cultural standards, and the country was apparently politically dependent on the powerful neighbour.

Khorezm, lying on the lower Amu Darya, occupies a special place in the ancient history of Central Asia. The country became independent of the Achaemenid kingdom as early as the 5th century B. C., and in 329-328 B. C. the Khorezmian king Pharasmanes arrived for negotiations with Alexander the Great accompanied by a cavalry unit of 1,500. At that time, a well-developed urban culture already existed at Khorezm. Soon after, probably during nomadic confederations' move south towards Parthia and Graeco-Bactria, a dynasty of nomadic origin became established here. In any case, when the first local coins were minted in the 1st century A. D., the figure of the mounted ruler was stamped on the reverse. Kushan coins also occur on Khorezm territory, but the minting of the local coin was apparently never interrupted. The type site of a city in ancient Khorezm is Toprak-kala. Its most important part was a citadel on a high brick platform, with a palace complex of ceremonial halls and a number of auxiliary buildings. The halls were profusely decorated with frescoes and clay sculpture. The decorations show traces of the influence of the Hellenistic portrait school as well as of Kushan standards and even, in the reliefs of grazing deer, the impact of the artistic style of the steppe nomads. The city itself was built on a gridiron plan with longitudinal and transverse streets dividing the space within the rectangle into regular quarters consisting in their turn of separate households. Business records were found in the palace complex made in Aramaic script popular in the Orient and adapted to the Khorezmian language. The records list, in particular, the members of "house families", that is, presumably, large family communities occupying the separate houses of the Toprak-kala quarters or sections. There were between 20 and 40 persons in each such household. The households had slaves, sometimes in



considerable numbers – up to 12 persons. At present, Soviet scholars are preparing the publication and translation of the numerous Khorezmian documents.

It is thus clear that the ancient Central Asian civilisation can be described as the sum of the achievements of a number of local cultures – Bactrian, Parthian, Sogdian and Khorezmian. It was probably within these countries that the ancient ethnic groups merged to form the separate peoples – Bactrians, Parthians, Sogdians and Khorezmians. The main cultural achievements were brought about by the development of the cities. In the 4th and 5th centuries A. D., the main cities in all the provinces declined and were replaced by fortified manors and castles. In the view of Soviet historians, these changes were brought about not only by the incursions of the nomadic tribes of the Chionites and Hephtalites but also by an internal crisis within the

ancient civilisation and the disintegration of its socioeconomic foundations.

The cultural heritage of the ancient epochs made a considerable influence on the subsequent development of the Central Asian civilisation. Many ancient attainments in both material and nonmaterial culture were preserved and developed during centuries.

The ancient civilisations of Central Asia also made a considerable impact on the other regions of the ancient Orient (especially India, Iran, China, and eastern Turkistan) and the Graeco-Roman world. Central Asian states stubbornly resisted the expansion of the Greek and Roman empires and even, as in the case of Parthia, competed with them.

The cultural synthesis of the local Central Asian and Graeco-Roman traditions showed great originality, producing remarkable specimens of art and architecture. This civilisation is one of the most interesting chapters in the history of the ancient Orient.

## Chapter 9

### *The Old Indian Civilisation*

The Indian civilisation was one of the oldest and most original in the East. Its contribution to the culture of humankind is immense. Already in antiquity India was known as "the country of sages". At a very early stage, ancient India maintained close cultural contacts with many countries of the ancient Orient and with the Graeco-Roman world. The achievements of the Indian civilisation made a significant impact on Arabic and Iranian culture. Many ancient writers and philosophers travelled to India to study Indian culture and the Indians' original views of the universe and the place of man in it. But a scientific study of its history and culture only began in the late 18th century. William Jones, founder of the Bengal Asiatic Society (1784), is regarded as the father of modern Indology. He was the first to translate the monuments of ancient Indian literature from Sanskrit into English. Gradually, several Indological schools—English, German, French, and Dutch—took shape in Western Europe.

Unfortunately, the scientific study of Indian culture in the 19th and early 20th centuries had a strong European bias. Many Indian phenomena were declared to have been borrowed from the West, and the development of state and society in ancient India were assessed tendentiously, from the positions of "European education".

Many West European scholars wrote, with colonialist prejudice, of the backwardness of Indian culture, its predominantly spiritualist character, and of the passivity of the Indians. These views were, in fact, a justification of the British rule in India.

Russian Indologists took a different approach to

the assessment of the Indian cultural heritage. Rejection of any bias and a profound respect for the people of India and its ancient culture have always been the distinguishing features of the Russian Indological school. I. P. Minayev, S. F. Oldenburg, and F. I. Shcherbatskoy made outstanding contributions to the study of India. Their works on old Indian literature and India's philosophy and religions have not lost their significance even in these days. I. P. Minayev (1840-1890), one of the first Russian Indologists and a profound scholar of old Indian culture, always defended the country's independence and supported the progressive forces fighting against British colonialism.

Indian scholars, who saw the protection of their ancient culture as a form of fighting for national liberation, have made a great contribution to the study of ancient India.

A new stage in the study of the ancient Indian civilisation began after India attained national independence. Indian archaeologists carried out important excavations in various parts of the country, discovering many monuments of material culture; Indian historians published fundamental works on various aspects of the history and culture of ancient India. At present, the first pages of the country's historical chronicle have been given a basically different interpretation, and the stages of the formation and development of civilisation in India have been defined with greater precision.

The results of archaeological excavations indicate that India was settled in remote antiquity. Early Palaeolithic cultures have been discovered in different regions. The development of economic and

social relations determined the transition from the Palaeolithic to the Mesolithic and later the Neolithic periods, whose monuments have been found in various parts of Hindustan. As early as the 7th and 6th millennia B. C., farming cultures existed in Baluchistan whose founders knew many cereals, practised the crafts, and made objects of art. The latest excavations at Mehrgarh (in modern Pakistan, by a French expedition) have revealed a successive development of local cultures from the pre-ceramic Neolithic to the Chalcolithic epoch, necessitating a revision of the traditional viewpoint concerning the relatively late (4th millennium B. C.) origin of the settled farming cultures in Hindustan. It is now clear that as early as the 7th millennium B. C. the local population cultivated many cereals, domesticated cattle, and established close contacts with the contemporaneous cultures of Iran and Central Asia. Thus India became one of the fountainheads of civilisation side by side with the most ancient Oriental cultures.

Our knowledge of the ethnic map of early India is still fragmentary. The country's north-west was apparently settled by Dravidian-speaking tribes, whose domain was gradually expanded as they moved to Deccan and southern India. Anthropologically, that population was Caucasoid. In the south, Australoid tribes lived before their arrival that were similar to Sri Lanka's Veddas. Judging from palaeoanthropological materials, eastern India was inhabited by Caucasoids, with significant Australoid admixtures. Linguistically, the ancient tribes of the east belonged to the Austroasiatic language family and were ancestral to the Mundas.

One of the most striking chapters in the history of ancient Indian culture was the Harappa civilisation.

*The Harappa Civilisation.* When the British general A. Cunningham, who conducted archaeological excavations in India, discovered a seal with unknown signs during an examination of a site at Harappa (northern Pakistan) in the 1850s, he was undoubtedly unaware of the importance of his discovery. Before the systematic excavations begun in the 1920s by Indian and later British archaeologists in the Indus valley (the digs at Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, "the city of the dead" in Sindhi), archaeologists knew practically nothing of the remarkable civilisation now termed Harappan.

Its discovery and study permitted a new interpretation of early Indian history. Some views had to be modified, others rejected out of hand. It is now impossible to assert, as some authors did, before the study of the monuments of the Harappa culture, that civilisation was brought to India from the outside, by Indo-Aryan or Sumerian tribes. At present, the Harappa civilisation is seen as a highly developed and locally based entity in no way inferior to the other civilisations of the ancient Orient (say, Egyptian or Mesopotamian)—it was even in some ways superior to them.

Springing from the local cultures, it gradually evolved into an urban civilisation. A sudden appearance of a well-developed civilisation (a view prevalent not long ago) is decidedly out of the question. Through a long and natural process, farming cultures of the pre-urban type developed into an urban culture, both pre- and early-Harappan settlements in the Indus valley being fairly advanced. The Harappa civilisation absorbed all the achievements of the previous epochs, but it was a qualitatively new stage in the historical process.

As long as excavations were restricted to the Indus valley, archaeologists believed that the Harappa culture's areal was limited to that region, too. Now Harappan settlements have been discovered over a vast territory measuring 1,100 kilometres north to south and more than 1,600 kilometres west to east.

After the Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro excavations, the view gained currency that these two cities were two capitals greatly surpassing all the others both in size and level of development. Major Harappan cities have now been discovered in other parts of India as well. It has been reckoned that up to 100,000 lived in the largest of them. At that time, cities were centres of crafts, trade and administration, but the majority of the population, who were farmers and livestock-breeders, continued to live in rural communities.

The chronology of the Harappa civilisation is a matter of considerable controversy, but the most widely accepted dating is 2500 (2300)-1800 (1700) B. C.

Precise planning in town-building, monumental architecture, the existence of writing, of a weights and measures system, and of art works are all indications of a high level of the Harappa culture. Excavations at the major centres have shown that Harap-

pans' cities were laid out on a grid plan, with the main streets up to 10 metres wide. Almost all the major cities consisted of two parts – the citadel rising above the city, and the “lower town”. The dwellings of the city's rulers were apparently in the citadel (some scholars believe that the priest's houses were also there), while most of the population lived in the “lower town”. The intercourse between the two parts was, judging from the excavations, limited: the citadel gates could be closed to lock the common people out. Well-to-do citizens lived in two- and even three-storey homes. Both baked brick and mudbrick were used in house construction. Mudbrick buildings offered protection against the tropical heat. Each household had auxiliary premises – kitchens, closets, pantries, and special rooms for performing ablutions. The dwellings clearly show marks of social differentiation: the poor lived in hovels.

The systems of water supply and drainage were worked out in detail. Dirty water flowed into settling basins, then into canals and beyond the city limits. The settling basins and canals were cleaned regularly. There were wells in the streets, and rainwater was collected in special reservoirs. The whole system was more advanced than in ancient Egypt or Mesopotamia. The Indians were very keen on hygiene already in hoary antiquity, realising the harm that can be done by accumulations of sewage and the resultant epidemics.

Apart from the living quarters, archaeologists have discovered public buildings in the Harappan cities – an enormous granary on a brick platform, with special platforms for thrashing, a public swimming pool 11.9 metres long, 7 metres wide, and 2.4 metres deep, with a bitumen-covered bottom, the city market place, and what looks like a temple. Artisans specialising in the various crafts – metal workers, jewelers, potters, engravers in ivory – toiled in Harappan cities. Bronze and copper were the principal metals of which weapons, agricultural tools, instruments, and even objects of art were made. Stone was still an important material in tool-making, and iron was not yet known.

Weaving flourished. Spindle whorls have been found in nearly every house. Archaeologists have also been lucky to have discovered small bits of cotton fabric. Harappan potters were expert professionals. Vessels were made on potter's wheels, baked

and painted. Their ornamental designs were varied, including vegetable and animal motifs, hatching, etc.

But the population's principal occupation was agriculture. Harappans cultivated wheat (of several varieties), barley, peas, and grew fruit. Rice has been found in some settlements. Irrigation was widely used in river valleys. Animals were domesticated, such as the dog, the cat, and the donkey; cattle, sheep and goats were reared. Harappans gathered in two harvests annually, and used fertiliser.

Harappan cities were major centres of trade, both domestic and external. Judging by finds of seals in Mesopotamian cities, trade with that area was particularly lively. The trade routes apparently lay both across land and sea. Excavations on Bahrain Islands have shown that it was a kind of staging post. Here, merchants from India must have met those going from Mesopotamia to the East. The discovery of a port and docks at Lothal (a Harappan city not far from modern Bombay) and pictures on Harappan seals of ships with mast rigging point to the existence of sea trading.

Recent excavations in Soviet Central Asia and Afghanistan show that the Harappa civilisation had close links with these areas, too. Soviet archaeologists working under Professor V. Masson have found a number of typically Harappan objects from the period of Harappa's heyday in the south of Turkmenia (the Altin-depe site, not far from the modern city of Merv). The most curious of these finds was a Harappan seal with an inscription consisting of two signs. A “Harappan factory” was discovered by the French expedition in northern Afghanistan.

The Harappan language and writing system are perhaps the most difficult riddles of the Harappan civilisation. More than 1,000 seals with inscriptions have been found. Inscriptions were also made on pottery and metal wares. Scholars have identified 400 different signs, but the sources of that writing system and the language spoken by the Harappans are a matter of acute debate. All kinds of hypotheses have been suggested, including conjectures about the connections between the Harappan writing system and that of the Easter Island, the Hittite hieroglyphic writing, the Semitic script, etc.

Opinions about the Harappan language vary just as widely. Some Indian scholars believe that it was

Sanskrit, as they assume that India was the homeland of the Indo-Aryan peoples. In recent years, new methods have been applied to the decoding of the Harappan writing and language based on computer techniques (work was done simultaneously by Soviet scholars headed by Professor V. Knorozov, who had obtained excellent results with the Maya writing, and by Indian and Finnish researchers). It has been established that the script was of the right-to-left type, but more important was the confirmation of the previously expressed hypothesis concerning the link between the Harappan language and the proto-Dravidian ancestral to the Dravidian languages spoken in modern southern India. Proceeding from this basic assumption, specialists are now trying to read the inscriptions, although the readings suggested are so far hypothetical. Unfortunately, no bilingual inscriptions have yet been found. Such a find would enormously facilitate the solution of the problem.

The conclusion that the Harappan population spoke a language related to the proto-Dravidian raised yet another extremely important problem—that of the Dravidian homeland. The view has been expressed that it lay north of the Indus valley—in south-eastern Iran and southern Central Asia. In any case, the Dravidian-speaking Brahui tribes now inhabiting some areas of Afghanistan and Pakistan are the descendants of the proto-Dravidians who lived in these and the neighbouring districts several millennia ago (apparently in the 4th millennium B. C.).

Archaeological materials and impressions on seals provide some material on Harappan religious concepts. The abundance of terracotta figurines points to the cult of the mother-goddess. Harappans also deified animals and worshipped fire and water. Totemistic beliefs were still widespread, as evidenced by the figures of bulls, elephants, crocodiles, rhinoceros, lions and tigers found on seals. Some scholars see certain figures on the seals as the prototypes of the Hinduist god Shiva; the Harappan deity is portrayed as having three faces, seated in a Yogin's posture, among animals. If we are to accept this hypothesis, the effect of the Harappa civilisation on the subsequent development of India, and above all on Hinduism, is obvious.

These features are characteristic of the so-called highly developed Harappa which was followed,

judging from excavations, by a decline of the culture. Its course varied in different regions, and the reasons may have varied, too (floods, climatic changes, tectonic phenomena, epidemics, etc.), but the striking feature is that all the settlements went into decline at about the same time—the 18th and 17th centuries B. C. There may have been one single underlying cause stemming from the society's internal crisis. Significantly, similar phenomena were observed in the urban civilisations of south-eastern Iran and southern Central Asia. It is hard to say what may have been the cause or causes of this phenomenon, but they could hardly have been external.

Some West European scholars, and in particular the famous British archaeologist Mortimer Wheeler, believed the decline of the main centres on the Indus to be due to a mass invasion of Aryan tribes. He cited in particular the fact that the excavations at Mohenjo-Daro have revealed a group of unburied skeletons lying in unnatural postures right in the street. At present, Wheeler's view finds no supporters. No traces of mass appearance of foreign tribes have been found. Where features of new cultures in the later strata of Harappan cities have been identified, they belong as a rule to different types, not to a single stream of Indo-Aryans. Besides, one of Wheeler's chief arguments has been shattered: the American archaeologist J. Dales has shown that the unburied skeletons belong to different levels (and therefore to different periods). In recent times, anthropologists applied new methods of analysis to these skeletons. In their view, malaria rather than violence was the cause of death. This conclusion does not rule out the reality of the arrival of Indo-Aryan tribes in India, but the historico-linguistic indications are that it happened several centuries later. Besides, the Indo-Aryans first penetrated the eastern Punjab, not the Indus valley, as is clear from the monuments of Vedic literature, above all from the *Rigveda*. That penetration proceeded in waves rather than through a simultaneous mass incursion. Thus the theory of the Aryan conquest of India, once fashionable, cannot now be accepted.

*The Indo-Aryans and the Formation of States in the Ganges Valley.* Some scholars saw the coming of Indo-Aryans to India as a conquest of backward aborigines

by the advanced Aryans, who brought civilisation to India and created a well-developed society. The proponents of this theory also introduced the theme of the racial difference between the strong and capable Aryans and the peoples of India racially incapable of independent development and progress. According to these totally unscientific theories, class society and the state emerged in India only with the arrival of the Aryans in India.

This view has now been abandoned, but many problems pertaining to the arrival of the Aryans in India remain unsolved. According to most scholars the Indo-Aryans' earliest written monument, the *Rigveda*, should be dated to the 11th or 10th century B. C. The data of Vedic texts are sufficient to trace, in general outline, the eastward movement of the Indo-Aryan tribes and their settlement of the Ganges valley. It was a long process, lasting several centuries and involving military conflicts with the local tribes and among the Indo-Aryan tribes themselves.

Advancing across wooded terrain was by no means an easy undertaking. The Indo-Aryans had to clear forests, often resorting to burning them – a natural enough process in those times. The principal occupations of the Vedic tribes were land cultivation (very limited at first) and cattle-raising. At the time they first settled in India, the Indo-Aryans made weapons and tools of copper, but later they mastered the techniques of iron production. Iron tools made it easier to penetrate into the forest areas of the Ganges valley, to till the soil and build artificial irrigation systems. The development of the handicrafts was also spurred on by the introduction of iron. The wooden plough was soon replaced by one with an iron blade, which opened up new possibilities for the tilling of stony soils.

The Indians of the Vedic epoch knew many cereals, including barley, rice, wheat, and leguminous plants. Rice began to be grown during the settlement of the Ganges valley. Some scholars believe that the Indo-Aryans had not known rice before their arrival in India, and borrowed the art of its cultivation from the local tribes.

Along with land cultivation cattle-raising continued to play a great role in the life of Vedic tribes. Vedic texts often repeat that cattle is man's principal wealth. The authors of hymns keep pleading with the gods to give them cows. War was seen as a means of getting cows. The capture of cattle was probably

the main cause of conflicts between Vedic tribes.

Ox-drawn carts and horse-drawn chariots were their means of transportation.

The Vedic tribes lived in small fortified settlements which, as archaeological excavations show, in no way resembled the large cities of the Harappa civilisation. With the development of the crafts, however, cities gradually arose in the Ganges valley. Various craftsmen are mentioned in the texts, including blacksmiths, weavers, carpenters, jewelers, gunsmiths, etc.

Vedic society showed obvious signs of economic inequality. There were the rich men possessing considerable quantities of cattle, and the poor men.

The emergence of slavery was a clear indication of the development of such economic and social inequality. At first, the slaves (*dasa*) were war captives, later members of the community were enslaved, too.

In that epoch, slavery was as yet undeveloped and patriarchal, as Vedic society was at the stage of tribal organisation.

Vedic tribes lived in communities or *ganas*; originally tribal in character, they developed into class entities. The communities consisted of large patriarchal families, or *kulas*. Consanguine ties were still very strong, and the clan's influence extended to all areas of life. Gradually tribal communities became differentiated, economic and social inequality arose, and the organs of tribal self-government became those of state power. Judging from the early Vedic texts, the ruler or *raja* was originally elected by the people apparently meeting in an assembly for that purpose. There are hymns devoted to the election of a ruler. "The people elect you that you should rule," says one of the hymns. As the formation of the state is a long process, survivals of the old political organisation persisted for a long time. Popular assemblies continued to play an important role. The tribal host gradually became a standing army headed by its chief. In battle, the king and the professional warriors (Kshatriyas) fought on chariots, and ordinary commoners on foot. Later, the practice of electing the ruler was replaced by the hereditary principle, power being handed down to the elder son as a rule. The early Vedic *ganas* evolved into state structures, usually embracing small territories. Depending on a number of conditions, they assumed the forms of monarchies or republics. However, archaic institu-



tions and features of the primitive communal system survived for a long time, particularly in remote areas.

Vedic hymns and epics mention a great many early dynasties and names of the earliest states in the Ganges valley, but the historical reality of these data is highly questionable, as in most cases they are not borne out by archaeological materials.

Of the great number of states in the Ganges valley, Magadha with time became the most prominent. The position of ancient Magadha (on the territory of modern southern Bihar) was very advantageous geographically and commercially. The sources speak of the fertility of the Magadha lands. The country conducted a lively trade with many regions of India and was rich in mineral resources, especially metals. Its ancient capital was Rajagriha.

Little is known of the dynastic history of Magadha. We have some data on king Bimbisara (545/544-493 B.C.), who, according to Buddhist texts, conquered the neighbouring state of Anga. That consolidated Magadha's positions and laid the beginning of its expansive policy. Bimbisara took great pains to strengthen the inner fabric of the state, introducing strict control over state officials. Under Bimbisara's son Ajatashatru (493-461 B.C.) a fierce conflict flared up with Prasenajit, ruler of Kosala, another strong state in the Ganges valley. After a long period of rivalry Magadha emerged victorious.

There followed an intense struggle against the republican union of Licchavis lying north of Magadha. The cause of the conflict was the seizure by Licchavis of a port on the river Ganges to which Magadha also laid claims.

To increase Magadha's might, Ajatashatru's son Udayin (461-445 B.C.) moved the capital of the state from Rajagriha to Pataliputra, which became ancient India's premier city. After that, the Nanda dynasty took possession of Magadha's throne and made Magadha a major empire.

The situation was different in north-western India, where there was no large state capable of uniting tribes and peoples differing ethnically, linguistically and culturally. Late in the 6th century B.C., some areas of north-western India were included in the Achaemenid empire. Later, certain provinces of north-western India were conquered by Alexander the Great during his campaign in the East.

Alexander entered Indian territory after winning a number of great victories. His immense and well-equipped army was a pledge of fresh success. North-western India was divided into tribal confederations warring against one another, and there was no unity between the rulers of small states. Some local kings as, e. g., Taxila's ruler, formed alliances with Alexander in return for a promise of autonomy and sovereignty over their former possessions. From the very beginning of his Indian campaign, however, Alexander encountered a stubborn resistance from the local tribes. Many Indian tribes refused to negotiate with the Graeco-Macedonians and sometimes even won victories against superior force.

The strongest of the Indian rulers of north-western India was king Porus, who decided to meet Alexander in open battle. The battle occurred on the bank of the river Hydaspes (modern Jhelum) and lasted several days. According to Arrian, 30,000 foot, 40,000 horse, 300 chariots and 200 elephants took part in the last and decisive encounter. Alexander only managed to break through the ranks of Porus's army after a cunning manoeuvre. Alexander won the battle, but Porus continued to fight even when he was covered with wounds. The Indian king's courage won Alexander's heart, and he spared Porus's life and did not even take away his possessions.

The Graeco-Macedonian army moved farther east to Hydroates (modern Ravi). Alexander began preparations for crossing the Hyphasis (modern Beas), but at that time unrest began in his own army, many soldiers insisting on ending the exhausting campaign. After some deliberation, Alexander gave up his dream and ordered a retreat, which was accompanied by a new wave of anti-Macedonian revolts and disturbances.

Alexander's campaign showed that lack of unity and inner strife were the main causes of the Indians' defeat. The struggle against the foreign forces compelled the local rulers to unite their efforts. At the same time that campaign considerably extended and consolidated India's external cultural and trading links. India itself exerted an increasing influence on the Hellenic world.

During Alexander's campaign, Magadha was ruled by the Nanda dynasty mentioned above. The state built by the Nandas prepared the ground for the great Maurya dynasty.

*India in the Mauryan Epoch.* The founding of the Mauryan empire was a most momentous event in the country's history. For the first time, a very extensive territory (the whole of Hindustan, in fact, with the exception of the extreme south) was united within one state. But the significance of that epoch is even greater than that: it was the time of a rise in the economy, including trade, a time of flourishing urban life and important changes in the ideological concepts.

The study of the preceding period is founded on the materials of archaeology and of the Vedic religious literature, while the Mauryan epoch left behind some precisely dated epigraphic monuments, such as king Ashoka's edicts, and the evidence of foreigners visiting India, especially the notes left by Megasthenes, a Seleucid ambassador at the court of the first Mauryan ruler Chandragupta in the empire's capital Pataliputra. The Mauryan epoch can be said to be reflected to some extent in a most interesting political treatise, *Arthashastra*, or *The Art of Achieving the Useful* whose compilation is traditionally ascribed to Chandragupta's adviser Kautilya but which was apparently written in the first centuries A.D., although it was based on earlier materials, including the official proceedings of the Mauryan period.

The sources are not unanimous on the question of the origin of the Mauryas. Classical authors write of Chandragupta's struggle against the Graeco-Macedonian garrisons and governors left in India by Alexander. Plutarch even gives a curious account of a meeting between young Chandragupta and Alexander in Punjab. Anyway, Chandragupta's successful struggle against the remnants of the Greek troops considerably strengthened his positions and enabled him to move from his original base in north-western India to Pataliputra. In a fierce battle with the last of the Nanda kings, he won a victory and with it, possession of the Magadha throne.

C. 314 B. C. Chandragupta became a full-fledged ruler and founder of the new dynasty of the Mauryas. But the political situation remained extremely tense. Especially difficult were the relations with the Seleucids, who had created their state on the ruins of Alexander's empire. Antique authors write of the military conflicts between Chandragupta and Seleucus Nicator, the then ruler of that state, and of the conclusion of a peace treaty

between them (in 303 or 302 B. C.). It is difficult to describe the course of that struggle with any degree of reliability, but, judging by the conditions of the peace treaty (Seleucus received 500 battle elephants, and the Mauryan king, certain areas in the north-west of India, previously conquered by Alexander), Chandragupta emerged, in fact, victorious. After concluding the peace treaty, Seleucus sent his ambassador Megasthenes to the court of the Mauryan king.

His memoirs, mentioned above, give a general picture of the administrative system of the empire. The army was very strong. Megasthenes quotes such figures as 600,000 foot, 30,000 horse, 9,000 elephants. A special staff of 30 military officials (*astinomes*) divided into six committees was in charge of the different armed forces. Tax collecting was a matter of prime concern. According to Megasthenes, the farmers paid the king taxes amounting to a quarter of the harvest (Indian sources usually mention a different figure—one-sixth).

Megasthenes's successor at the Mauryan court was another Seleucid ambassador, Deimachos; in his time, the empire was ruled already by Chandragupta's son Bindusara. During that period, the Mauryas also kept up diplomatic relations with Egypt of the Ptolemies: ambassador Dionysius was sent to Pataliputra. The data of the local sources on Bindusara's reign are extremely sketchy, but it is known that one of his sons, Ashoka, ruled north-western India, and that his capital was Taxila. After his father's death, Ashoka acceded to the Mauryan throne.

Ashoka's numerous epigraphs of edicts, found in different parts of India, recount the most important events of his reign, and provide ample materials on his policy and system of government. The inscriptions permit a fairly precise dating of the beginning of his rule: he was apparently crowned in 268 or 267 B. C. The locations of his edicts also provide a frame of reference for the boundaries of his empire: it included not only western, central, eastern and southern India (with the exception of the extreme south) but also the territories of modern Pakistan and some regions of Afghanistan. Comparison of the Indian and non-Indian versions of king Ashoka's edicts shows that the principal version was written in Pataliputra, the empire's capital, and then was sent to the various provinces, where the local scribes trans-

lated them into the local dialects or languages, adapting the original to these languages. Most of the edicts are written in the Brahmi script, and only the north-western versions, in Kharoshthi – a script that evolved from Brahmi under the influence of Aramaic. The Brahmi and Kharoshthi scripts were deciphered in 1837 by James Prinsep, a British scholar and an official of the East Indian Company.

The emperor's inscriptions speak of his bloody war with the state of Kalinga on the east coast (modern Orissa), in which more than 100,000 men died and 150,000 were taken prisoner. The seizure of this strategically and commercially important country, which used to be the Nandas rival, did much to consolidate his positions.

After that victory, Ashoka's main attention was directed towards the domestic situation. Relying on ethical principles that were popular throughout the country, he worked out a new concept – that of *dharma-vijaya*, or "winning through dharma". The *dharma* rules were of general ethical character and, judging from the king's edicts, implied obedience to seniors and parents, support for the basic principles of state policy, respect for teachers, deference to Shramans and Brahmins, generosity, refusal to take a living being's life, etc.

Special officials called *dharmamahamatras* were appointed to supervise the observance of these norms. They were sent to different regions of the empire, different strata of the population and members of different religious faiths. *Dharma* was thus placed above religious, ethnic, or social norms; it was in no way sectarian.

Judging from the edicts, Ashoka showed a special interest in Buddhism. He says himself that he visited a Buddhist community (*sangha*) and became an *upasaka*, or lay follower of Buddha's teaching; travelling through the empire, he visited Lumbini (in modern Nepal) – the place where the founder of Buddhism was born, according to the tradition. His religious policy was based on the principle of tolerance. The emperor realised the importance of supporting Buddhism for consolidating the empire, but adopting it as a state religion would have aggravated the already tense ideological confrontation of various religions and interfered with his basic aim of creating a solid and unified state.

This policy strengthened the unity of the empire and extended the social basis of the Mauryas. To-

wards the end of his reign, however, Ashoka violated the principle of religious tolerance, showing special concern for the Buddhist community and interfering in its affairs. At the same time his attitude to the other religions changed for the worse. All of this resulted in acute religious conflicts and actually destroyed the principles he had declared in his edicts. In the last years of Ashoka's reign the situation became very tense due to the opposition of Brahmins, discontent at court, and revolts in the provinces, which took advantage of the emperor's weakening power to start fighting for their independence.

Late Buddhist and Jaina sources have preserved some interesting stories concerning the last years of Ashoka's reign. His generous gifts to the Buddhist community ruined the state treasury and his own estate. His grandson Sampadi (Samprati) achieved great eminence at court. Ashoka is reported to have uttered words full of sadness and disillusionment: "Earlier, when I gave orders, no one dared to oppose me. Now my orders are not carried out ... my edicts are dead letters." It is hard to say whether these later sources are an accurate reflection of the actual events, but it may be assumed that they express the general mood of the times.

Soon the empire was divided (presumably after Ashoka's death) into two parts, eastern and western. The emperor's successors were unable to preserve the empire's former might and unity. In 180 B.C., power at Pataliputra passed on to a member of the new Shunga dynasty. Thus one of the most famous ancient Indian dynasties disappeared from the political arena, and one of the most powerful empires of the ancient Orient fell.

Explanations of this event vary. Some scholars believe that Ashoka's policy of inculcating *dharma* could not be an effective means of unifying the empire, and that Ashoka was a dreamer and not an astute statesman. Others stress the importance of the Brahmanic opposition which managed to seize power. These explanations, however, touch on the external circumstances rather than the basic causes.

Despite its seeming unity, the Mauryan empire was, even at its peak, a union of peoples and tribes at different stages of social, economic and cultural development. Held together by a strong army, the empire was a unified structure in form only. Actually, each of the provinces followed its old traditions and customs, secretly aspiring for indepen-

dence. A weakening of central authority inevitably entailed a disruption of unity. External factors may also have been instrumental in this process. We know from antique sources that in 206 B. C. the Seleucid king Antiochus the Great crossed the Hindu Kush and "renewed a friendly alliance with the Indian king Sophagasenus". Modern scholars believe that the alliance with Antiochus was concluded by Somasharman, one of the last Mauryan rulers. Polybius reports that Antiochus travelled across Arachosia and Drangiana. Previously, Arachosia was part of Ashoka's empire, but now the Mauryas apparently lost control over that region.

Antiochus's campaign was not the only foreign invasion in India at that time, it seems. During the reign of the Shungas, the country was invaded by the Graeco-Bactrians called in the Indian texts the Yavanas (Greeks). Patanjali, the author of a well-known grammatical treatise who lived in the Shunga epoch, pointed out that the Yavanas even besieged the capital, Pataliputra. Similar reports are preserved in one of the Puranas and even in a drama by the great Kalidasa. Some classical authors, such as Strabo, also speak of the Graeco-Bactrians' campaign, but it is hard to say which of the Bactrian kings, Menander or Demetrius, led it. We can only assume that the Bactrians achieved their greatest successes under Menander, whose army may have advanced deep into India, but it cannot be stated positively whether he seized Pataliputra or not.

*The Kushan Empire.* After the fall of the Mauryan empire, several small Indo-Greek states were formed in the north-west of Hindustan; their political history has so far been reconstructed in general outline only. The best known Indo-Greek king was Menander, whose kingdom, judging from the finds of coins, may be assumed to have included Gandhara, Arachosia, and some areas of the Punjab.

The Indo-Greek kings came into conflict with the Saka tribes, which penetrated India from Central Asia in the 1st century B. C. At first, the Indo-Greeks were more successful in this struggle, but later the Sakas gained the upper hand, founding Indo-Saka states in north-western India. Later the political map of the region became even more checkered, as Indo-Parthian dynasties rose, endeavouring to seize

the possessions of Indo-Greek and Indo-Saka rulers. Indo-Parthians became particularly strong under king Gondophares, but soon they had to give way to the new and more powerful Kushan dynasty. Originally, the Kushans occupied the territory of Bactria in Central Asia. Chinese chronicles report that Yüeh-chi tribes invaded Bactria from the east in the 2nd century B. C., forming five possessions there. The strongest of these gave the name to the dynasty. At the time of the Yüeh-chi invasion of Bactria, solid traditions of state and culture already existed there. The Bactrians spoke Bactrian, an Iranian language, and had their own writing system derived from the Greek script. The Kushan culture was based on a synthesis of Bactrian elements and the Kushan traditions.

Kushan kings gradually extended their territory. Under Kujula Kadphises they established their dominion over Arachosia, part of Parthia. The capture of these areas inevitably led to a conflict with Indo-Greek rulers. Judging from Kujula Kadphises's coins, he was apparently compelled to recognise the Indo-Greeks' sovereignty: the obverse side of his coin is stamped with a portrait of the Indo-Greek king, and on the reverse side his own name is written in Kharoshthi script. But this situation did not continue long: Kujula Kadphises's later coins were minted in his name only, and he himself was named "king of kings".

Kujula's son Vima Kadphises expanded the Kushan empire to the lower Indus. His coins are also found in the Ganges basin, which may mean that he captured those Indian regions as well. The Indianisation of the Kushans was reflected in Vima Kadphises's coins, on which the figure of the god Shiva is stamped. The king is sometimes called Maheshvara, which is one of Shiva's names. Under Vima an important monetary reform was implemented – a new gold coin was introduced with the face-value of one Roman *aureus*, and definite face-values of copper coins were established. This may have been necessitated by a monetary crisis and the existence of different monetary systems in different regions of the empire. The unification of coins was of great significance for the centralisation of the state.

Unfortunately, the materials now available do not permit a precise dating of the reigns of Kujula and Vima. Opinions vary, but the most generally accepted dates are 25 B. C.-A. D. 35 for the reign of

Kadphises I, and A. D. 35-62, for Kadphises II, or slightly later.

The Kushans' best known ruler was Kanishka. In his reign, the empire flourished, the economy and culture reached a peak, and Mahayana, or "northern Buddhism", became widespread. Our information on the rule of Kanishka is based on a brief series of inscriptions in which time is reckoned in terms of the "Kanishka era", and on numismatic data. Besides, there is a considerable body of data about him in the late Buddhist narratives, where he is portrayed as a zealous Buddhist. Under Kanishka, the Kushan state expanded considerably to include the areas of Bihar and certain territories of central India as far as the river Narmada.

Chinese chronicles relate the story of the struggle between the Kushans and China over eastern Turkistan. The Kushan army advanced deep into these territories, but we do not know precisely how long the power of the Kushan kings lasted there. It is only clear that under Kanishka Kushana became one of the strongest empires of the ancient world, competing with China, Rome and Parthia. The links with Rome became especially animated at this time. The report of antique authors concerning an Indian embassy in Rome during the reign of emperor Trajan (A. D. 99) refers probably to Kushans.

Kanishka's religious policy must have been one of tolerance, as indicated by his coins bearing the images of Indian, Hellenistic and Zoroastrian deities. Buddhism was not a state religion under Kanishka, although Buddha was several times portrayed on his numerous coins.

The problem of dating Kanishka's reign, the "Kanishka era" mentioned in his and his successors' inscriptions, is extremely controversial. For a long time the view was prevalent that the "Kanishka era" began in A. D. 78, but now many specialists are inclined to date the beginning of his reign to a later time—the first quarter of the 2nd century A. D.

Kanishka's better known successors were Huvishka and Vasudeva. In their reigns, the Kushans' attention became focused on the Gangetic territories. It was more and more difficult to maintain Kushan rule over the north-western provinces. The Kushans absorbed the Indian traditions and established close contacts with the local population.

Under king Vasudeva, signs of a beginning decline of the empire became apparent. His heir fought

hard both against the strong Sassanid dynasty in Iran and the local dynasties that became established in different regions of India. The fight against Sassanian Iran was most acute under Shapur I (A. D. 241-272), when the western provinces of the Kushan empire became part of the Sassanian state. Towards the end of the dynasty, the Kushans ruled over the Gandhara region only, and later nearly all of the Kushans' Indian possessions became part of the Gupta empire.

The Kushan period was an important epoch in the historical and cultural development of many regions of the ancient world. Different peoples were united within a single empire in which certain common traditions arose; close links were established not only within the Kushan state but also with Rome, the countries of South-East Asia, and the Far East. Kushan coins are found in the most diverse regions, even as far as Africa and Northern Europe. The Kushan culture matured on the basis of different traditions—elements of the local civilisation were combined with the achievements of the Graeco-Roman world.

Soviet scholars' recent excavations in Central Asia have yielded important materials on the development of the local schools of architecture and sculpture. The Bactrian school occupied a special position in Kushan art, exerting its influence over all the others. The Kushan epoch was one of wide spreading of Mahayana and of the moulding of various schools of that branch of Buddhism.

After the fall of the Kushan state, a long period of political fragmentation set in which continued until the beginning of the 4th century A. D., when the new and powerful Gupta empire began to take shape.

The consolidation of the Gupta state commenced during the rule of Chandragupta I, who adopted the magnificent title of Maharajadhiraja, "ruler of great kings". The beginning of Chandragupta's reign (the "Gupta era") is dated to A. D. 320.

Under Samudragupta, the empire reached still greater might. The Allahabad inscription, compiled by the court poet Harishena in honour of the king's splendid victories, mentions the names of kings and countries conquered by the Gupta ruler. Samudragupta seized many areas of the Ganges valley and even Deccan. The southern regions, which apparently formed no part of the empire, were regarded as

a tribute-paying vassalage. Some regions of western and north-western India were also the Guptas' dependencies. Samudragupta also kept up close links with Sri Lanka.

Under Samudragupta, the empire became one of the greatest in the ancient East. Its influence grew, and close links were established with many states. According to epigraphic data, Samudragupta ruled until A. D. 380, when his throne passed on to his son Chandragupta II, whose reign ended in A. D. 413 or 415.

Chandragupta II is one of the most popular figures of the Indian tradition, where he is known as Vikramaditya, or "The Sun of Might". Traditions link up his reign with the work of many great writers, poets and scholars. Chandragupta II's reign is often called "the golden age of the Guptas" by modern Indian historians.

After Chandragupta's death, his son Kumargupta (A. D. 415-455) inherited the throne. Soon after his death his successor Skandagupta had to fight hard against the tribes of Hephthalites, or White Huns, who invaded India.

That tribal union, which had earlier inhabited Central Asia, became especially powerful in the 5th century, growing into a mighty threat to Sassanian Iran and the last rulers of the Kushan dynasty. First, the Hephthalites defeated the isolated kings who ruled the western regions of the once powerful Kushan empire, and then won impressive victories over the rulers of Sassanian Iran. They also invaded north-western India and seized Gandhara. At that time (c. A. D. 457-460) the first encounter between the Guptas and the Hephthalites took place. The war entailed considerable financial difficulties for the Guptas.

Under Skandagupta's successors, the empire was troubled by strong separatist movements, the more remote provinces fighting for independence from central authority. The unity of the empire was breaking down.

Fresh incursions of the Hephthalites dealt a new blow to the Guptas. Under the Hephthalite king Toramana (A. D. 490-515) the White Huns advanced deep into India, seizing Sind and certain areas of Rajasthan and western India. Toramana's heir Mihirakula at first won several victories over the Guptas, but then the Gupta king Narasimhagupta, or Baladitya, routed his army in a decisive

battle, and Mihirakula had to go back to north-western India, retaining power over Gandhara areas and some of the provinces of Punjab only (his capital was the city of Sakala, modern Sialkot).

For some time the Guptas maintained their dominion over Magadha and other areas, but these were merely weak descendants of the once powerful Gupta kings. Chronologically, the post-Guptan period belongs to the early medieval epoch, not the ancient history of India.

*Southern India.* It was believed for a long time that southern India lagged far behind the country's north in antiquity, that civilisation there took shape much later, and only under the influence of northern cultures. That mistaken view was due to the fact that no regular archaeological work was done in southern India, while the earliest written monuments in Dravidian languages date only from the first centuries A. D. After the latest discoveries of Indian archaeologists and historians, it has become clear that southern India went through the same stages of historico-cultural development as the North. Major states existed here already in the first millennium B. C. During the Maurya period, the most important of these were Chola, Chera and Keralaputra. Particularly famous was the Satavahana empire founded in Deccan in the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C. The Satavahanas also had possessions in western India and competed with north Indian states.

In that period, and especially in the first centuries A. D., southern India became a most important centre of Indian trade. It established extensive and solid links with Rome. The Romans founded a trading colony in the south of India; remnants of a Roman factory have been excavated at Arikamedu (not far from modern Pottuchcheri).

During that period, Sanskrit and Prakrits were highly popular in the south. Inscriptions, literary and scholarly works were written in these languages. The South was introduced to the epics of northern India. But the local Dravidian substratum played a great role in the general process of cultural development. Significantly, some coins of Satavahanan rulers are stamped with the title and name of a king in Sanskrit on one side and in ancient Tamil on the other.

Epigraphic materials offer a general picture of the



system of government in the states of Deccan and southern India in the first centuries A.D. The Satavahanas created a well-developed system of central government: the empire was divided into provinces, and into districts, run by numerous officials, including military governors, officials in charge of food supplies, chief scribes, and rural officials.

Certain data are available on the religious policy of the southern Indian dynasties. The Satavahanas patronised Buddhism. The work of the well-known Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna may have been linked with the Satavahanas. Side by side with Buddhism and Jainism, Hinduism became widespread. Religious syncretism was one of the specific features of the cultural development of Deccan and southern India in antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

*The Economic Development.* During many centuries, agriculture played a most important role in the economy of ancient Indians. The introduction and wide spreading of iron facilitated the settlement and cultivation of the Ganges valley, as iron agricultural implements (especially iron ploughshares) qualitatively changed the nature and results of agricultural work.

In some areas, two and even three annual harvests were taken in. Ancient Indians grew rice, wheat and barley. Rice was especially widely grown in Magadha. Archaeological evidence and written sources show that, apart from barley, wheat and legumes were widely cultivated. In southern areas, where the climate was more arid and the soils less fertile, millet was extensively sown. Much work on the construction and maintenance of irrigation systems was done by the state, as well as by the rural communities and individual landowners.

The role of agriculture sharply increased in the first centuries A.D. Many cereals were already exported. The *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* (2nd century A. D.) records exports of rice and wheat from India.

Horticulture became especially highly developed, and new varieties of fruits (e. g., peaches and pears) and vegetables appeared. Ancient Indians grew mangoes, oranges, grapes, and bananas. The coconut palm became widespread, particularly in coastal areas. Whole plantations of such palms were cultivated in that period.

Although farming was the leading branch of production, cattle-breeding also played a considerable role in the economy.

In the second half of the 1st millennium B.C., urban centres of crafts and trade began to arise in the Ganges valley. The cities varied in size, of course. Pataliputra, the capital of the Mauryan empire, was the largest and most populous of these cities. According to Megasthenes, who lived in the capital, its territory was more than 25 square kilometres. If this evidence is to be accepted, Pataliputra was one of the largest cities of antiquity (Alexandria was three times smaller).

The urban handicrafts, especially weaving, metal-working, and jewelry-making, were highly advanced. We admire, though we still cannot understand the secret of it, the skill of 5th-century Indians who made the iron column, seven metres high and weighing more than seven tons, which has not been corroded in all the centuries gone by, despite the humid climate. Royal metalworkers and armourers made up a craftsmen's guild especially strictly controlled by the state, as the king was regarded as the owner of all the mineral resources, and the mining rights were a crown monopoly.

Iron wares were produced in great variety. During the Kushan and Guptan periods, armourers' art was influenced by Graeco-Roman and Central Asian models, but on the whole the metalworkers followed local traditions. Iron and steel products were of very high quality, and widely exported. The *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* mentions the export of Indian iron and steel to African ports. It also speaks of the export of copper. Indian jewelry was highly prized far beyond the country's borders. In Taxila (western India) foreign jewelers must have worked who were familiar with Hellenistic traditions, as many of the jewelry items found here are similar to objects from Egypt and Syria. In eastern India, external influences were less significant.

Weaving was highly developed, especially the making of cotton fabrics which were exported along with silk to the West, where they were highly prized. Benares fabrics and thin cotton fabrics from Bengal were particularly widely known. In the north-west, woollen fabrics were also woven.

Trading along river and sea routes, as well as overland, was vigorous. The sources relate stories of Indian merchants going on dangerous sea voyages

which lasted up to six months. Their ships went to Sri Lanka, Burma, and South Arabia. Many Indian goods—spices, precious stones, ivory, rare types of wood—went to Hellenistic countries.

Sea trading became especially active in the Kushan-Guptan period. Ancient Indians were expert seafarers and could use the monsoons apparently long before they were discovered by the Greek seaman Hippalos in the mid-1st century A. D.

The author of the *Periplus of the Eritrean Sea* saw large Indian ships on the Malabar Coast. In the first centuries A. D., Egyptian traders voyaged to India, while Indian merchants, according to the same source, permanently lived on the island of Dioscurias (Sokotra).

The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien made an interesting voyage from India to China, first travelling from Tamralipti, in the east of India, to Sri Lanka, then across the ocean to Jawa and on to China.

*The Class and Social Structure.* In ancient India, just as in the other countries of the ancient Orient, there were three principal classes: the class of slaves and hired workers whose position was similar to that of slaves, the class of free producers, and the ruling class consisting of various groups of slave-owners.

Slave labour was used already in the Vedic period, but only in the Magadha-Mauryan times and especially later in the Kushan-Guptan epoch, did it become particularly widespread. It should of course be borne in mind that different areas of the vast country were at various stages of social development. In the more advanced regions, the slave-owning socioeconomic structure was the leading one. A slave in ancient India was regarded as a thing or a kind of domestic animal; slaves were called two-legged animals, as distinguished from the four-legged livestock. There were rules for inheriting slaves, along with other property. Slaves toiled in the royal palace, in the houses of well-to-do citizens, and in rural communities. Owners of small plots of land also could have slaves, although their number was not great, of course. A slave could be given away, sold, pawned, or lost in a game of dice.

Slaves fell into several types, according to the manner of their acquisition, but the main criterion was whether the slavery was for life or temporary. Only the master could set the slave free, but under

definite conditions slaves, especially temporary ones, could buy their freedom.

Slaves did various types of work. The sources mention the use of slaves in agriculture; together with hired workers, slaves cut down trees, clearing lots for cultivation. Slave labour was also used in the handicrafts.

Ancient Indian slavery had certain distinctive traits. Slave labour was very close to that of free hired workers, the *karmakaras*. Significantly, many sources mention slave labour along with that of hired workers. Another characteristic feature of slavery was wide use of slave labour in the household, which was a basic part of ancient Indians' life. That gave a certain patriarchal quality to the relations between master and slave.

On the whole, however, slavery played a most important role in the structure of ancient Indian society, despite its patriarchal character, similarity between slave labour and the labour of free producers, and the continued existence of rudimentary economic forms. Slavery was the prime form of exploitation.

The principal producers in ancient India were the free commoners engaged in farming. The village community was the most widespread type of societal group, although primitive consanguine communities still existed in the more backward regions. Each community existed within certain borders; it owned the villagers' common land and the public buildings. The cultivated land was divided between the free members of the community. Besides the royal taxes paid by the owners of individual lots, the community also had to pay a communal land-tax.

Economic differentiation was already rather pronounced in the community, the gap steadily growing between the commoners who tilled their plots and the richer men who exploited slaves and hired workers. Some commoners became ruined, losing their land and being obliged to become leaseholders. The lower strata made up the exploited group. The position of rural craftsmen was not uniform either. Some of them worked in their own workshops, while others were hired for wages.

The community retained some features and traditions of an integral, undifferentiated entity. Free commoners organised community festivities, including religious ones. The community as a whole could make contacts with other communities and the king.

The community protected the rights of its free members and was to some extent independent in its internal affairs. The free commoners gathered in assembly to handle various matters of community management. At first, although the community's top people carried much more weight than the rest, the head of the community was elected by commoners' assembly, but later he was appointed by the state authorities, gradually becoming their representative. Only free commoners could vote in the assembly; slaves and hired workers had no political rights at all.

Besides communal lands, there were privately owned and crown estates in ancient India. The differentiation among private landowners was very advanced: their possessions ranged from vast tracts of land to small plots.

The rights of property owners were protected. Unlawful appropriation of other people's property was punished by a large fine, and the person guilty of such an act was declared to be a thief. It was forbidden to interfere in the owner's affairs. Only the owner of land could decide what to do with it—he could sell it, give it away, pawn it, or lease it.

The king endeavoured to restrict the rights of private owners. He received taxes from the lands of private owners and kept a close watch over the state of their affairs. If an owner abandoned his lot at the time of sowing or harvesting, the king could impose a fine on him. Fines could also be imposed for failure to pay taxes, but the state could not take away the owner's land. The state also took measures against violations of the rules regulating the sale of land.

The community, like the state, tried to restrict private ownership of land, imposing especially tight controls on the sale of land, in which relatives and neighbours had pre-emptive rights. The community's opinion was taken into account in disputes over the boundaries of settlements and land lots.

State lands and the king's private domain constituted another part of the country's stock of land. The state land category included forests, mines, and uncultivated land. Royal estates were managed by a staff of overseers. The king could also have small lots of land in the communities, which he might dispose of as his own—he could give them away, sell, or rent. Royal estates were tilled by slaves, hired workers, and various categories of lease-holders. But the king was not the owner of all the land cultivated in his

state. The view, expressed by some researchers, that the state had the monopoly of owning land in ancient India is untenable.

One of the characteristic features of the social structure of ancient India was the existence of a system of *varnas* (social groups) and castes. Four *varnas* existed already in the Vedic epoch: the priests, or Brahmins; the top military, or Kshatriyas; the traders and farmers, or Vaishyas; and the artisans and free but impoverished strata, or Shudras. The division into the *varnas* cannot of course be equated in its social content with the basic division of ancient society into classes, existing side by side with it. The *varnas* embraced only the free population, while the slaves were not included in any of the *varnas* and were thus outside the system.

The social position of the Brahmins was especially prominent. They had a great influence in ideology and the cult. Brahmins occupied the posts of chief advisors at royal courts and in the courts of law. Many of them were very rich and owned large estates.

The political power was in the hands of the Kshatriyas, whose influence grew at the time of the founding and expansion of strong empires. The kings were as a rule Kshatriyas and had command of the army.

Many sources tend to oppose the two higher *varnas* to the two lower ones and even to lump the *varnas* of Vaishyas and Shudras together. However, as some Vaishyas grew rich, their status approached that of the higher *varnas*, while the impoverished ones actually degraded to the state of Shudras. These processes began with the development of trade and the crafts.

In the course of historical development the division into *varnas* began to recede into the background. Noble origin lost its primacy, and economic position began to play an increasing role. The division into *jati* or castes, which were hereditary, endogamous, and associated with certain occupations, became paramount.

The number of the *jati* gradually increased. Owing to the division of labour and specialisation, castes especially multiplied in the cities, among the various categories of artisans, but they also developed in the villages. The *jati* as an institution were separate from the *varnas*, which continued to exist as distinct and rigid groups.

The lowest rung of the social ladder came to be

occupied by the "untouchables", who stood outside the caste system. These outcasts had to do the dirtiest work (as dustmen, graveyard sweepers, etc.). The higher *varnas* were forbidden to come in contact with the "untouchables".

The first centuries A. D., and particularly the late Guptan period, were marked by new features in the social relations. Private ownership of land became especially widespread. Special deeds recording the sale and buying of land appeared. The number of royal grants of land to private individuals grew, but perhaps more importantly, their character changed. Previously, a gift of land merely meant the right of using land without any rights with regard to the peasants, but later the situation changed. Earlier, many grants of land were temporary—for the term of office only, but now they became more and more often hereditary. Some types of land grants became "eternal", the certificates specifying that the land was given for good, "as long as the sun, the moon and the stars shine". That strengthened the rights of private owners and made them rather independent from central authority.

As the private owners assumed some of the rights of managing these lands and the farmers working on them, they began to exercise certain judicial functions. Later the kings handed over almost all of the fiscal, administrative and judicial functions to the private owners. Even the right to the exploitation of mines, which was traditionally regarded as a crown monopoly, was transferred to private individuals.

These practices increasingly changed the status of temporary landowners into that of hereditary feudals who gradually established their sway over the peasants. It was a slow process, of course, and for a long time the state retained many of its administrative functions.

The sources from the first centuries A. D. increasingly provide evidence of "the gifts of villages", or the handing over of the right to collect taxes from these villages. The land was not transferred in this act—it only meant a change in the person who collected the taxes from the peasant. These "gifts" were not yet feudal, but there was an undoubted drift towards the development of feudal relations here.

Significant changes also occurred in the position of direct producers—slaves, free commoners, and hired workers. There was a distinct tendency to check the permanent enslavement of temporary

slaves. Fines could now be imposed on slave-owners for violation of their obligations, which were set down in written form.

In the Guptan epoch, the manumission of slaves became a particularly acute issue, often mentioned in the sources of the period. The conditions of manumission, especially of temporary slaves, were eased.

The position of free farmers also changed. Not only lands but also the people who tilled them were now often given away by the king to private individuals. This practice was gradually extended to previously free commoners, as a result of which they became dependent peasants. By the middle of the first millennium A. D., the feudal structure and feudal relations became established in India.

*The Culture of Ancient India.* Early Indian culture is rightly believed to be one of the most original cultures of the ancient epoch. Its achievements in the most diverse areas—in literature, art, science and philosophy—have formed part of the treasure-house of world civilisation and exerted a considerable influence on the further development of India itself and of some other countries. Indian influence was especially great in South-East and Central Asia and in the Far East.

Religion was a major factor in the life of an ancient Indian, as it generally was in antiquity. It largely determined the character of contemporary nonmaterial culture. We therefore begin our consideration of ancient Indian culture with its principal religions.

*Hinduism.* Hinduism was the main religion in those times (more than 80 per cent of the Indian population still belong to this faith). Its roots lie in remote antiquity.

The religious and mythological concepts of the tribes of the Vedic epoch are reflected in the Vedas, offering a wealth of material on mythology, religion and ritual. Vedic hymns have always been regarded as sacred texts in India. They were handed down from generation to generation by word of mouth in their original form. These hymns, pleas addressed to the gods, and charms provide a picture of the Vedic man's world, his concepts of the universe and his

beliefs. The totality of these beliefs is termed Vedism. Vedism was not a common Indian religion but only that of a group of Indo-Aryan tribes which settled the Eastern Punjab and Uttar Pradesh and was the creator of the *Rigveda* and other Vedic collections or *samhitas*. Vedism as a religious system also reflected the faiths of an earlier time, since the Indo-Aryans of the Rigveda epoch retained many of their concepts of the Indo-Iranian period. It is only natural that considerable similarities are found in the beliefs of ancient Indian and Iranian tribes.

A characteristic trait of the Vedic religion was polytheism – worshipping many gods and other deities rather than a single one. They were usually endowed with human traits (anthropomorphism), but sometimes also with those of half-gods and half-animals (theriomorphism). Indra, the god of thunder and a powerful warrior, was the principal god. Particularly popular were hymns recounting Indra's victory over the daemon Vritra. Ancient Indians believed that that victory gave men access to water, making their fields rich in moisture and bringing rich harvests.

Together with other gods, Indra gained victories over their numerous enemies. Indians believed that, besides kind and gracious gods, there was a whole host of evil daemons bringing misfortunes to man. The god Varuna was believed to be the guardian of world order and justice. Agni, the god of fire, protector of the hearth, "the guardian of the house and of the people", was an object of special worship. Surya the sun-god was associated with the coming of the day; driving his chariot in the morning, he dispelled the darkness of night. The Indians of the Vedic epoch divided the whole universe into three spheres – heaven, earth, and *antariksha*, i.e., the space between them, and certain gods were associated with each of these spheres. Surya and Varuna were the gods of heaven, Agni and Soma, the god of the "holy intoxicating drink", were the gods of the earth.

Characteristic of Vedism was a certain syncretism of the god's images. There was no strict hierarchy of the deities, no supreme god, so that in appealing to some god, the Vedic people endowed him with the characteristics of many deities – at each concrete moment the god spoken to seemed to be the most important one, the one that brought happiness and warded off diseases and misfortunes.

An Indian of the Vedic epoch deified the natural forces, personifying plants, mountains, and rivers. Later, the doctrine of metempsychosis evolved. After death, a righteous man went to paradise while sinners awaited a messenger from Yama, the god of the underworld. To win the favour of the gods, Indians made sacrifices and prayed for assistance, offspring and wealth. The offerings varied, of course. Rich men's sacrifices were splendid ceremonies, while poor men were content with offerings of flowers and "holy water". The Vedas speak of the sacrificial fire in honour of the gods, consuming grain, Soma – "the holy intoxicating drink", the drink of immortality, and sacrificial animals. It was deemed especially righteous to make the sacrifice of a horse (*ashvamedha*) – a ritual that only the king could perform. The complex rituals demanded the services of persons initiated in the mysteries of the cult, the magic acts and songs. Originally, there were no professional priests as a separate social group – it only evolved with the increasing complexity of rituals.

The Vedas reflect the spiritual world of the Indians of that remote epoch and their interesting cosmogonic concepts. Already at that time man began to ponder over the mysteries of the universe, the causes of the emergence of the world, and of all that lives on the earth. Those were, of course, naive attempts at a mythological explanation of the mysteries of the universe. The Vedic hymns expressed the idea that even gods were not eternal, that the world was created by a certain abstract deity, that the earth, the sky, the sun, human beings and gods all appeared from the giant called Purusha. One of the hymns, known as the *Hymn of the Creation of the World*, declared a certain featureless substance to be the basis of being.

One might say that the Vedic conceptions of the world were extremely contradictory, but it is significant that already at that remote epoch the Indians doubted the omnipotence of the gods, despite the enormous influence of religion and magic: the gods could not explain the mysteries of nature, the origin of man and the world. Water was regarded as the first element giving birth to everything that lived and determining the cyclic transformation of matter.

Many features of the Vedic religion became part of Hinduism, although the latter was a more sophisticated religion reflecting a different stage in India's

spiritual life and certain qualitative changes\*in the social order.

As distinct from Vedism, Hinduism emphasised the idea of god the creator and established a strict hierarchy in the pantheon. The cults of the gods Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva began to play a special role, these three gods forming a triad or *Trimurti* perceived as a manifestation of a single supreme deity. Brahma was regarded as the creator and ruler of the world, and he also established the social laws (*dharma*) and the division into *varnas*; it was he who punished unbelievers and sinners. Special stress on the role of Vishnu the divine protector, or Shiva the divine destroyer led to the emergence of two principal directions in Hinduism—Vishnuism and Shivaism. That division was recorded in the texts of the *puranas*, the principal sources of Hinduist mythology that took shape in the first centuries A. D. Along with the Indo-Aryan beliefs, the two directions of Hinduism absorbed the faiths of India's non-Aryan population, Dravidian faiths above all. In general, Hinduism as a religious mythological system absorbed and assimilated the faiths of different tribal groups.

Assimilation of various cults and their merging with the Vishnu image was facilitated by the *avatara* system—the doctrine that the god Vishnu could go down into the world and appear in different images through transfiguration. The early Hinduist texts speak of ten *avataras* of Vishnu. The first is connected with the story of the Flood, when Vishnu, desiring to save men, assumed the guise of a fish. The second *avatara* is the one of Vishnu assuming the image of a turtle and procuring the drink of immortality (*amrita*). In the third *avatara* Vishnu, in the image of a wild boar, defeated a daemon and saved the earth from destruction. The fourth *avatara* is of a man-lion, who was able to defeat the daemon through his titanic might. In the fifth *avatara* Vishnu cunningly assumed the guise of a dwarf and was thus able to fool the king of the daemons, winning back the earth. The sixth is the Parashurama or the Ramawith-an-Axe *avatara*, in which Vishnu defeated the Kshatriyas who had seized power on the earth. The seventh *avatara* is the one of Rama who defeated the evil *rakshasa* or daemon Ravana (the story of Rama's exploits forms the basis of the famous epic poem, the *Ramayana*). The eighth *avatara* is in the image of Krishna, the hero of the Yadava tribe. This is one of

the most popular *avataras*, and Krishna became the theme of many myths. The Krishna cult became so popular that its followers even formed a special branch of Vishnuism called Krishnaism. The ninth *avatara*, in the image of Buddha, resulted from the absorption of Buddhist concepts in Hinduism. The tenth *avatara*, as Kalki, reflects the notion that at the end of the Kaliyuga, the present age, Vishnu will appear riding the white horse Kalki and destroy all misfortunes, restoring order and justice on the earth.

In later Hinduism, the Krishna *avatara* became pre-eminent above the others. Some scholars believe that the name Krishna is of a local, pre-Aryan origin, and that the introduction of that hero's cult in the Hinduist pantheon reflects the syncretic character of that religion.

The Vishnu *avataras* indicate the influence on Hinduism of old totemistic concepts, which were given doctrinal explanations in that religion.

The cult of Shiva, who personifies destruction in the triad of the supreme gods, gained great popularity at an early stage. But Shiva is associated with different qualities in the mythology, where he appears as the god of fertility, an ascetic, the protector of cattle, and a shaman dancer. All this shows that the Shiva cult absorbed various local beliefs. There are a number of proofs of Shiva's non-Aryan genesis; his cult reflects the archaic beliefs of the Dravidian population of northern and especially southern India.

Unlike the Vedic cult, the Hinduist rites are connected with the temples and other cult structures, and with worshipping sculptured images of gods.

The religious concepts of Hinduism made a great impact on various aspects of the life of old Indian society, including its social sphere. The system of *varnas* was believed to be sacred, and believers were expected to perform a rigorously defined range of duties and social obligations. Hinduism also prescribed the everyday rites. It was believed that one could not become a Hinduist—one could only be born one.

Hinduism was especially widespread in the Middle Ages, when it became the population's main religion—and still remains one.

Among the vast number of religious and philosophical Hinduist works, *Bhagavadgita* (The Song of the God) has always enjoyed the greatest popularity. Although it forms part of the *Mahabharata* epic



poem, it can also be viewed as an independent work. It is in the form of a dialogue between the warrior Arjuna and Krishna, the terrestrial embodiment of the supreme deity, expounding certain precepts concerning the destiny of man, truth, high morality, the sense of duty, the mundane and the divine. The core of the poem is the description of the paths leading the believer towards religious "release". Love of god (*bhakti*) is seen as the main virtue.

That poem became a symbol of India's spiritual life. It figured in the works of many statesmen, writers, and artists, and was often cited by Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Rabindranath Tagor to name but a few.

*Buddhism.* Buddhism appeared in India much later than Vedism, but after a few centuries that religion crossed the borders of India and became established in many Asian countries. It is now one of the three world religions.

The Buddhists link the beginnings of their religion with the name of the Buddha Shakyamuni who was born, according to the tradition, in the 6th century B. C. No written sources of that period are available. The lives of the founder of Buddhism were written by Buddhists several hundred years after his death. These biographies are the only source of our knowledge about the facts of the Buddha's life and the religion he preached.

According to the Buddhist tradition, Siddhartha Shakyamuni ("the hermit of the Shakyas") was born in the village of Lumbini (modern Nepal) to a family of Kshatriyas. Living in Sarnath (near modern Varanasi), he "attained enlightenment" at the age of 40, and people began calling him the Buddha ("the enlightened one"). No reliable historical data from the times of Buddha's life have survived, and it is thus impossible to say whether he was a historical personality or not. There can be little doubt, however, about the existence of a real founder of the Buddhist doctrine, though his name and the facts of life reported by the tradition cannot be verified.

As in any other religion, the starting point of Buddhism was the idea of salvation. In Buddhism, the attainment of that "release" is termed nirvana. According to the early Buddhists, only monks could hope to attain nirvana, but all believers had to strive

towards it. On that long path, they must follow the principal commandments and above all the Four Holy Truths. In these truths Buddha outlined the causes of human suffering and "the path of release". According to the tradition, Buddha said that his religion had the "taste of salvation" just as water in the ocean tasted of salt. Life was suffering arising from desire, from the wish to lead an earthly life and enjoy its pleasures. It was therefore necessary to renounce desires and to follow the Eight Paths—right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

The ethical aspects played a very great role in Buddhism. The emphasis was to be on the moral side of man's behaviour. Righteously following the righteous path, man had to rely on himself, according to Buddha, and not seek protection, help and salvation from the outside.

Buddhism did not recognise the existence of god the creator who, according to Hinduism, engendered everything in the world, including man, of god on whom man's destiny depends.

Despite the idea of universal equality as men's birthright and the democratic character of the Buddhist community of monks, or *sangha*, Buddhism was not a radical social movement. The cause of all worldly burdens, earthly misfortunes and social injustice was, according to the Buddhist sermons, the result of man's personal "blindness", his inability to give up the worldly desires. It was only possible to overcome earthly sufferings by extinguishing all responses to the world and destroying the awareness of one's ego, not by struggling.

However, the Buddhist rejection of hard-and-fast caste partitions and advocacy of equality as men's birthright were especially attractive to the merchants, the Vaishyas who had grown rich but occupied a very modest niche in the social hierarchy in the order of things decreed by Brahmanism. Buddhism also found support among the Kshatriyas who at that time concentrated power in their hands but felt strong ideological pressure from the Brahmins who declared themselves to be the supreme and the only holy *varna*, and even earthly gods.

Free members of all *varnas* were admitted to the *sangha*, or the Buddhist order, and that significantly extended the influence of the new teaching. Buddha did not handle complicated metaphysical matters in

his sermons, the emphasis in early Buddhism being, as pointed out above, on the ethical aspects.

At the time of the Mauryas, two principal trends took shape in Buddhism – the *Sthaviravādinas* (the followers of the “School of the Elders”) and *Mahasanghikas* (the adherents of “the Great Assembly”).

The latter trend seems to have become the basis of the Mahayana doctrine (“the Great Vehicle”, “the wide path”) opposed to Hinayana (“the Little Vehicle”, “the narrow path”) – a term applied by the Mahayanists, in derogation, to the more restricted and orthodox version of the Buddhist religion. In India, the conflict between the two schools never came out in the open.

The earliest Mahayanist texts must have appeared already in the 1st century B. C., but most of them date from the first centuries A. D.

The Mahayanists believed that the Hinayana doctrine being too individualistic was not suitable enough for the broad spreading of the Buddhist ideas. In Hinayana, everyone had to think of personal “release”, of the attainment of individual enlightenment and nirvana, whereas Mahayana proclaimed compassion and the need to help all living beings regardless of their personal qualities. That was why the Mahayanists called their doctrine “the broad path”.

The concept of *bodhisattva* was a most important one in Mahayana. It was also present in Hinayana, but in Mahayana the *bodhisattva* cult acquired special significance. It was believed that a *bodhisattva* was a being capable of becoming a Buddha, coming close to the state of nirvana but refusing to plunge into it out of great compassion for the other beings.

Hinayanists insisted that only monks who renounced all things mundane could reach nirvana, whereas according to Mahayana the supreme release was also accessible to the laity.

The two trends differed in their view of the figure of the founder of the religion and of the Buddha concept itself. In Hinayana, Buddha was regarded as an actual historical person who pointed to believers the paths and modes of salvation, whereas in Mahayana he was regarded as a supreme absolute being. Mahayanists taught that every living being is a potential Buddha, containing as he did a certain particle of the essence of Buddha.

In Mahayana, Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* became objects of worship. Rituals assumed special signifi-

cance. Figures of Buddha as the supreme being appeared in Buddhist art.

Since nirvana was achieved, according to Mahayana, through *bodhisattvas*, believers tried to win their favour by making rich gifts. In the first centuries A. D. Buddhist monasteries became rich property owners. Kings and other rich followers of Buddhism gave them land, great sums of money, and various valuables.

*Philosophy* was highly advanced in ancient India. The principal philosophical schools took shape in the first centuries A. D. They had a marked influence on the subsequent development of Indian culture and on philosophical thought in other countries. Significantly, philosophers of ancient India mostly pondered on the same questions as the thinkers of the Graeco-Roman world, but the two traditions studied them independently from each other. Just as the Graeco-Roman world, India was the scene of conflict between materialism and idealism. The best known school of old Indian materialists was Lokayata.

The Lokayatikas opposed the principal propositions of the religious philosophical schools, including the ideas of religious release and the omnipotence of the gods. They regarded sense perceptions as the main source of knowledge. All that is in the world, including consciousness, consists of elements, according to the Lokayatikas. The atomistic theory of the Vaisheshika school was a great achievement of old Indian philosophy, which parallels in some respect the views of Democritus. Patanjali, the founder of the Yoga school, paid special attention to problems of the human psychology. Nagarjuna, a major Mahayanist philosopher, formulated the concept of “universal relativity” or “emptiness” (*shunyavada*). His ideas made a great impact on the destinies of Buddhist philosophy in Tibet and China, while his study of logical categories largely predetermined the development of the Indian school of logic. It is rightly believed that Indian philosophy was the strongest side of Indian civilisation.

*Literature and the Theatre.* With its diversity of genres, linguistic and cultural traditions, depth and originality of content, and exceptional poetic quality,

ancient Indian literature occupies a place of honour in the history of world literature. Ancient India gave the world such a great writer as Kalidasa, whose creative work was a most important stage in the country's cultural development. When first translations of his works appeared in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Kalidasa was studied by the greatest writers and poets of Western Europe—Goethe, Herder, Schiller, Heine, and others. Goethe called Kalidasa's drama *Shakuntala* an infinitely profound work which made an epoch in his life. Kalidasa's work became known in Russia as early as 1792, when a Russian translation of his dramas appeared and the Russian historian and writer Nikolai Karamzin wrote of Kalidasa's significance for the whole mankind, comparing the ancient Indian dramatist with Homer.

The history of ancient Indian literature is usually divided into several stages—Vedic, epic, and the period of classical Sanskrit literature, or the Kavya literature, although side by side with works in Sanskrit there existed a rich literary tradition in the Prakrits (the Middle Indian languages) and in the Dravidian languages, of which Tamil is the most important. A characteristic feature of the first two stages is the prevalence of the oral tradition in transmitting the text—a feature that is also observed in the later phases of the development of ancient India's literature. Vedic literature, of which the most ancient monument, the *Rigveda*, is tentatively dated to the 10th or 9th centuries B. C., comprises various collections of texts of a religious nature. Vedic hymns are not only cultic monuments but also poetry expressing man's experience and his inner world; the sacral character of the texts did not preclude the emergence of rudiments of a literary tradition proper. Even the *Rigveda* contains hymns in dialogue form, probably reflecting embryonic elements of the art of drama. Satirical motifs also occur in Vedic collections. The so-called wedding hymns are highly poetic.

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, the two great epic poems of ancient India, are true encyclopedias of ancient Indian life. They made a profound impact on the subsequent development of Indian culture. The images and themes of the epics became part of the country's tradition, much studied by outstanding dramatists, musicians, and artists. These epics have been translated into many Asian languages and

were highly popular in Nepal, Cambodia, Indonesia, Tibet, and the Far East already in the early Middle Ages. In their artistic quality, sheer size and impact on the cultures of other peoples, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* are comparable with the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* (the *Mahabharata* contains 100,000 distichs, and the *Ramayana*, 24,000). When the epics were translated into the European languages, they became highly popular in Europe, too—they were admired by Heine, Beethoven, Rodin, and in Russia, by Belinsky, Tolstoy, Roerich, and others.

The final versions of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* date from the first centuries A. D., but the heroic epics evolved over an immense period of time, absorbing diverse materials from the oral poetic tradition, assuming an increasingly didactic character, being permeated by religious and philosophical ideas, and incorporating works of a properly religious nature, like the *Bhagavadgita*.

The basis of the *Mahabharata* story is a narrative concerning the rivalry of two royal clans—the Kauravas and the Pandavas, and the 18-day battle on the Kuru field. The tradition ascribes the authorship of the poem to the wise man Vyasa, but its true creator was the Indian people. Vyasa may have been one of the first narrators, but later, during many centuries, the epics were sung by numerous bards who gave them interpretations of their own and added new narratives and motifs to it.

The *Ramayana* tells the story of an expedition to the island of Lanka by king Rama to rescue his beloved Sita stolen by Ravana, the king of the daemons. Rama and Sita are favourite heroes of millions of Indians. Their devotion to each other became a symbol of high moral ideals.

Many epic themes formed the basis of literary works of the subsequent epochs, and they are still popular in India. The story of *Shakuntala* was borrowed by Kalidasa for one of his dramas. Kalidasa was the author of numerous plays, and epic and lyrical poems—*Malavikagnimitra*, *Vikramorvashi* (The Courage of Urvashi), *Meghaduta* (The Messenger Cloud), *Kumarasambhava* (The Birth of Kumara), *Raghuvamsha* (The Clan of Raghu).

The period when that great master lived has not been established precisely, but most scholars refer it to the 4th or 5th century A. D.—the Golden Age of the Gupta empire. Kalidasa's main themes are

man's griefs and joys, the society of his epoch, and the social relations full of contradictions and conflicts. Rising above the horizon of his epoch, Kalidasa condemned the sinful acts of kings and nobly-born heroes, and sang the praises of the honesty and industry of the simple people. Kalidasa's highly artistic works are full of humanism and faith in the future. As a dramatist, Kalidasa continued a more ancient tradition, but he was also an innovator.

In the Guptan epoch, the Indian theatre flourished. This was reflected in a number of special treatises on drama. One of these, entitled the *Natyashastra*, sets forth in detail the tasks of the theatre, various types of dramatic works, the techniques of acting, staging, etc. The level of the old Indian theatre was so high that many Indologists of the 19th and early 20th centuries believed that theatre in India flourished under a direct influence of the Greek theatre, but, although India and the Graeco-Roman world had close ties, theatre emerged in India quite independently from outside influences; more than that, the Indian theatre tradition is older than the Greek one.

Of the works in Sanskrit, highly popular was the *Panchatantra*—a collection of stories and parables largely based on folklore materials. The *Panchatantra* was translated into many languages of Asia, including Pahlavi, Syrian and Arabic. It was known in the Middle East as *Kalila and Dimna*.

Side by side with Sanskrit works connected with the Brahmanist Indian tradition, there also existed in ancient India a rich Sanskrit literature in the Buddhist tradition. The most striking figure here is the poet and dramatist Ashvaghosha (1st-2nd centuries A. D.). His poem the *Buddhacarita* (The Life of Buddha) marked the beginning of a new genre in India—the artistic epic, with strong influences from folklore poetry. Ashvaghosha is often described as India's first playwright. His play the *Shariputra prakarana* (The Prakarana of Shariputra's Conversion) exerted a considerable influence on the subsequent development of Indian drama.

Bhartrihari, who lived in the post-Guptan epoch, was the first truly lyrical poet of ancient India. He continued the humanist traditions of Kalidasa, describing the life of the ordinary people, everyday situations and social conflicts.

The theory of literary creativity, including poetry, was highly developed in ancient India. The rules of

versification were worked out in detail, and treatises on metrics and poetics were compiled. One of the earliest works on poetics, the *Kavya-alamkara* (Poetic Adornments), was written by Bhamaha (4th-5th centuries A. D.). Gradually, several schools of poetics evolved holding different views on the essence of poetry, artistic devices, genres, and the language of poetry.

Of the early literary monuments in Tamil, mention should be made above all of the *Kural*, traditionally ascribed to Turuvalluvar. That collection of maxims, which absorbed numerous folklore elements, reflected the long history of the independent development of the literary tradition of India's Dravidian population. The *Kural* is still highly popular in India.

The ancient Indian literature and folklore, part and parcel of the country's cultural achievements, laid the foundations of the development of India's national literature. Many major writers of Europe and America—Whitman, Hesse, Zweig, Tolstoy, Rolland, Kipling—fascinated by ancient Indian literature, borrowed plots and motifs from it.

*Art.* Chronologically, the first monuments of architecture and art of ancient India belong to the epoch of the Harappa civilisation, but its greatest masterpieces date from the Kushan-Guptan epoch, of which monuments of both religious and secular character had high artistic merit.

In earlier antiquity, most buildings were of wood, so that no architectural monuments have survived. Judging from Megasthenes's notes, the enormous palace of the Mauryan king Chandragupta was built of wood, and the excavations conducted in the capital of his empire Pataliputra (modern Patna) yielded only remnants of stone columns. In the first centuries A. D., stone was already widely used in construction. The religious architecture of that time is represented by cave complexes, temples (Hinduist, Buddhist, Jaina) and stupas—stone shrines in which, according to the tradition, Buddha's relics were preserved.

Of the cave complexes, the most impressive are the ones at Karli (near Bombay) and Ellora (not far from Aurangabad). The cave temple at Karli is immense—nearly 14 metres high, 14 metres wide and 38 metres long, with monolith columns in the central

hall, a great number of sculptures, and a stupa shrine.

During the Guptan epoch, the construction of the cave complex at Ellora was begun, and it went on for several centuries. In the 8th century, Kailasanatha, the largest cave temple of India, was carved in a rock.

The Hinduist temple at Sanchi, one of the best specimens of ancient India's architecture, dates from the 5th century. The Buddhist stupa at Sanchi, surrounded by a railing and gates, is also very famous. The carved ornaments of the gates, presenting scenes from Buddha's life, are of fine craftsmanship.

Several schools of sculpture existed in ancient India, of which the Gandhara (north-west India), Mathura (in the Ganges valley), and the Amaravati (at Andhra) schools were the most prominent. Most of the surviving sculptures are cultic in nature, but secular tradition was also very strong. Ancient Indian manuals on sculpture contained rules for making statues intended primarily for temples and other cultic structures. Different religious traditions—Buddhist, Jainist, and Hinduist—of icon painting worked out different sets of artistic devices.

A notable feature of the Gandhara school is amalgamation of various traditions—local Buddhist, Graeco-Roman and Central Asian. Many Gandhara sculptures differed so greatly from the Indian models that some scholars assumed that the school was of Roman or Hellenistic origin. Still local Indian art prevailed in that school. In Gandhara, we find very early representations of Buddha. The beginning of that tradition apparently lay in the Mahayana doctrine, where the concept of Buddha as the supreme being evolved. Previously, Buddha was not portrayed in the image of god or historical person but was denoted by various symbols—the Bodhi tree (according to the tradition, Prince Siddhartha achieved enlightenment under that tree, that is, he became the Buddha), the wheel symbolising the Buddhist view of the ceaseless round of life, etc. The appearance of *bodhisattva* statues was also due to the Mahayana doctrine.

The Mathura school, whose florescence coincides with the Kushan epoch, is marked by an emphasis on secular themes, although sculptural compositions on purely religious topics were also produced. Statues of Kushan rulers and art patrons formed a whole gallery of secular works. The Mathura school was

affected by the earlier Mauryan art, and some specimens even indicate the influence of Harappan traditions (terracotta figurines of the mother-goddess, local deities, etc.). Unlike Gandhara and Mathura, the Amaravati school embodies, along with the Buddhist tradition, certain elements of southern traditions. These artistic canons lived on in later south Indian sculpture. The Amaravati school influenced the art of Sri Lanka and of South-East Asia.

In the late Guptan epoch, in which the role of Buddhism declined while Hinduism and its cultural traditions were invigorated, the character of sculptural monuments changed: the images of Buddha and of the *bodhisattvas* were strictly canonised, and sculptures of Hindu gods became widespread.

Few monuments of ancient Indian painting have survived, but those that have offer evidence of a high level of that art, great skill of Indian painters, and originality of their style and manner. Old Indian texts often speak of the enormous esthetic significance of painting, and whole treatises on the techniques of wall-painting appeared. Ancient Indians saw painting as "the best of the arts", offering the greatest variety of themes and subjects. Painting was intimately connected with the traditions of the people's life, expressing man's inner world and the ways of nature and the universe. Paintings were made on wood, fabrics, and stone. In ancient India, painting was perceived as a magic force capable of warding off evil and bringing well-being and happiness. The art of painting was very highly prized. Painters' canvases were hung in royal palaces and private houses, and special galleries were built for displaying them.

The best-known monument of old Indian painting is the wall paintings of the Ajanta caves, the so-called Ajanta frescoes, although they were not frescoes *sensu stricto*, as the paintings were made on dry plaster. That Buddhist complex consists of 29 caves of which the walls and ceilings are covered with paintings. Their themes are scenes from Buddha's life, mythological events and subjects, and those from Buddhist tales, the *avadanas*. We see here scenes from everyday life as well as the life of the royal court—royal hunts, reception of ambassadors, etc. The paintings are amazingly well-preserved, despite their hoary age, the humid climate and their location in the open caves. Ancient Indians skilfully reinforced their priming and knew the secrets of durable

paints. The priming was in two layers, with beeswax, treacle and stone used to hold them together; after the outer priming dried, the wall was glossed and covered with lime milk. An outline of a picture was first made and then painted in. Colour was believed to affect the viewer more than any other element of painting and was therefore handled with the greatest care. The choice of colours strictly depended on the subjects: gods and kings were always painted in white; white could not be used for evil characters.

The Ajanta traditions influenced painting in India's other regions and in Sri Lanka (cf. the famous frescoes of Sigiriya). Already in antiquity, the Ajanta frescoes made a great impression on anyone who saw them.

*Science.* Science in ancient India reached a high level of development. The Indians' achievements in mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and linguistics were particularly impressive. They made a considerable impact on the culture of other ancient peoples, especially on medieval Arabic and Iranian science. The discoveries made by Indians in great antiquity anticipated many of the results of European science of the modern times.

Aryabhata (5th-early 6th centuries A. D.) was one of the world's greatest mathematicians and astronomers. He gave a very accurate value for  $\pi$ , and he also suggested an original solution for linear equations that is close to the methods of modern mathematics.

The development of the decimal system, including the use of zero, was an outstanding achievement of ancient Indian science. The notion of zero resulted not only from the evolution of the mathematical tradition itself but also from the philosophical concept of "emptiness" introduced as was pointed out above by the Buddhist thinker Nagarjuna. The decimal system was borrowed by Arab scholars (we still speak of "Arabic figures") and later learnt by all the other civilised peoples.

The old Indian system of denoting numbers determined the modern system of numbering and underlies modern arithmetic. The theory of abstract numbers and the cipher system formed the basis for a highly advanced algebra. It was in this area that ancient Indians achieved remarkable results, as dis-

tinct from Graeco-Roman science which concentrated on geometry. Ancient Indian algebraic treatises were widely used by Arab scholars, whose works began to be studied in Western Europe in the 11th and 12th centuries. Thus al-Khwarizmi's algebraic treatise, largely relying on the works of Indian mathematicians, was translated in 1145 from Arabic into Latin.

On the threshold of the Middle Ages, Indian mathematicians made a number of discoveries which were rediscovered by European scholars much later, already after the Renaissance. The concept of negative magnitude was worked out; rules for finding square and cubic roots established; solutions for problems in proportional division, percentages, linear equations with one or several unknowns, and in computing the ratio of the length of the circumference to the diameter were suggested.

Some mathematical terms still used by scholars are of Indian origin, as, e. g., "cipher", "sine", "root".

The art of mathematics was highly valued in ancient India. "Just as the sun eclipses the stars, so can a scholar eclipse the fame of others, by suggesting mathematical problems and even more by solving them," wrote the mathematician Brahmagupta (6th-early 7th centuries A. D.).

Old Indian treatises on astronomy bear evidence that that science was also highly advanced—and kept advancing all the time. Independently of the science of classical antiquity, Aryabhata formulated the brilliant hypothesis that the earth rotates round its axis. That truly revolutionary idea deviated so sharply from the traditional views and religious concepts of the structure of the universe that Aryabhata's work was strongly condemned by orthodox priests and scholars.

Astronomical texts point to the Indians' familiarity with the results achieved by Babylonian, Greek and Roman scholars. One of the astronomical treatises (*siddhanta*) was called *Romaka* (Roman). Greek astrology was especially highly prized in India, and some astrological texts were translated from the Greek into Sanskrit.

The introduction of the decimal notation facilitated precise astronomic computations, although there were no telescopes or observatories in ancient India. The Syrian astronomer Severus Sebokht wrote in the 7th century that the astronomical



discoveries of the Indians were "more ingenious" than those of the Babylonians and Greeks, and in the words of al Jahiz, a 9th-century Arab scholar, "the science of astronomy comes from them [the Indians], and other peoples borrowed it".

*Ayurveda*, or the science of longevity, born here in great antiquity, is still widely respected in India.

Ancient Indian physicians made profound studies of the properties of herbs and of the influence of the climate on man's health, and paid considerable attention to personal hygiene and diet. Considerable progress was also achieved in surgery. Ancient Indian medical treatises of the first centuries A.D. mention 300 different operations and 120 surgical instruments. Indian surgeons could perform Caesarian sections, set bones, and perform facial plastic surgery. Indian medicines were highly popular in the countries of the antique world, in Central and South-East Asia, and the Far East. Tibetan medicine, so popular now in the West, is based on the traditions of ancient Indian *ayurveda*.

Despite the independent origin of the two traditions, there is a similarity between ancient Indian medicine and the physiological theories of the Graeco-Roman culture (Hippocrates, Galen, and others). Ancient Indian physicians believed that three main "vital juices" (or prime elements) – wind, gall and phlegm – formed the basis of the human organism; they were identified with the principles of motion, fire and softness (similar concepts of "vital juices" existed in Greek medicine as well). Just as the science of classical antiquity, Indian medicine laid particular stress on anthropogeography, or the influence of the natural conditions on the human organism. The theories of heredity and medical ethics also showed certain similarities in India and the countries of the Graeco-Roman world.

Despite the considerable achievements of medical science in ancient India and the rationalism of many prescriptions and recommendations of Indian physicians, their treatises on medicine were largely imbued with mythological concepts, while medical knowledge proper often blended with magic.

The science of language was highly developed in ancient India due to the great role of the oral tradition in the Indian culture and the ancient notion of the divine origin of speech. Speech was believed to underlie all the arts and sciences. The analysis of language material was so profound and detailed in

Panini's grammar called *Ashtadhyayi* (literally, Eight Books), and his ideas were so strikingly original, that modern scholars find close parallels between them and the ideas of modern linguistics. Among other things, Panini practised the structural approach in describing grammatical phenomena; he was the first to introduce the zero concept in linguistics, and so on.

Unfortunately, only a small number of scholarly treatises and works on various branches of scientific knowledge proper have survived from ancient times, but even these texts testify to the ancient Indians' considerable contribution to world science.

*Cultural links.* Already in early antiquity, India had close ties with many countries of the Orient and the West, exchanging cultural values with them. In the times of the Harappa civilisation (3rd and 2nd millennia B.C.), trading and cultural contacts were established with Mesopotamia, Iran, and Central Asia. In the Mauryan epoch, the links with Greece, Egypt, South-East Asia, and the Far East were consolidated. The ties were especially close with neighbouring Iran. Achaemenid influence can be traced in Indian architecture and literature, while ancient Iran borrowed a great deal from Indian science. Chess came to Iran from India and then became popular in other Oriental and Western countries.

Spreading from India to Central Asia, Buddhism played a considerable role in its history, as Indian literature and scholarly treatises came with it to these countries. The same was true of South-East Asia and the Far East. Ancient Indian epics were highly popular in Asia.

Indian traders arrived in Egyptian ports bringing metal, glass and ivory wares, while Roman merchants kept up lively trade with southern India and even founded their trading station there.

Antique authors report that Indian embassies reached Rome under Augustus, Trajan, Hadrian, and Aurelius. In the first centuries A.D., antique and early Christian philosophers and writers were familiar with the teachings of Indian philosophers.

Indians were very much interested in Graeco-Roman astronomy and astrology, as is clear from the translation of an astrological treatise known as *Yavana jataka*, or Greek Work, from the Greek into

Sanskrit. The medicines of Indian physicians were highly prized in the Graeco-Roman world.

Ancient Indian culture exerted a great influence on the culture of Sri Lanka and South-East Asia. The writing systems of these regions evolved on the basis of the Brahmi system, and a great many Indian words were borrowed into the local languages. Buddhism and Buddhist literature were highly influential in Sri Lanka, while Hinduism and Sanskrit literature spread in South-East Asia.

Ancient Indian colonies were founded in Central and South-East Asia. In the first centuries A. D.,

Buddhist monks began to arrive in China, bringing religious and philosophical texts, medical treatises, and books on astronomy. Chinese craftsmen borrowed a great deal from Indian architects, artists and sculptors. Indian music and poetry were very popular in China.

Ancient traditions are highly viable in India, and it is therefore not surprising that many achievements of the ancient Indian civilisation long outlived the epoch of antiquity, becoming an inalienable component of the country's modern culture and of world civilisation.

## Chapter 10

### *Ancient China: History and Culture*

*The First States on Chinese Territory. The Shang and Chou Periods.* In China, the conditions for the emergence of civilisation proved to be less favourable than in such northern subtropical countries as Sumer or Egypt. The state appeared here at a later stage in the development of productive forces, namely, during the advanced Bronze Age.

In the 5th-3rd millennia B. C., several Neolithic complexes appeared on the territory of China, of which the Yangshao culture in the basin of the river Wei and the middle course of the Hwang Ho is better studied than the others. With its handmade painted pottery, half-settled slash-and-burn agriculture without irrigation (the main plant cultivated being *setoria italica maxima*) and domestication of a number of animals (pigs and dogs in the first place), the Yangshao culture typologically belongs to the advanced Neolithic. This culture marked the start of the development of the ethnic ancestors of the ancient Chinese. Scholars studying that period emphasise the southern ethn racial links of the Yangshao culture.

The Stone Age in the Hwang Ho basin ends with the Late Neolithic and Eneolithic Lungshan complex, with its grey and fine black burnished pottery, usually made on the wheel, of which the best specimens are as thin as eggshell. The Lungshan culture differed from Yangshao in a more settled stick-and-hoe farming, the first signs of separation of the crafts from farming, and rudiments of metalworking. A typical Lungshan settlement was surrounded by rammed earth walls, sometimes 6 metres high and 14 metres thick—a definite mark of wars as a constant factor in social life. Oracle bones were used by

Lungshan men for divination purposes, which points to the existence of an organised cult.

In the 2nd millennium B. C., settlements of the early urban type, the carriers of bronze industry, arose on the banks of rivers over a vast territory—from Kansu to Shantung and from Hopei to Hunan and Jiangxi. In the late 2nd millennium B. C. the Shang city society became separated from the Yin tribal union on the middle Hwang Ho and placed itself at the head of a rather large, ethnically heterogeneous and unstable union. Its chieftain, called *wang*, had extraordinary military powers and acted as the supreme priest. The “Great city of Shang” is known to us from the ancient proto-Chinese inscriptions discovered late in the past century near the city of Anyang in northern Honan. There was a cult centre here, where the Shang and other groups performed their divination rites and the archives of the Yin oracle were kept from which thousands of inscriptions on animal bones and tortoise shells used for divination have survived. The name of the Yin oracle stems from a later historical tradition, as the Yin hieroglyph is absent in the Anyang texts themselves. The reason for that may be that those who appealed to the oracle naturally did not ask questions about the oracle himself. The fact that the only inscription of that epoch containing the Yin sign (in the combination *Yin wang*) was found in the river Wei basin, that is outside the Anyang cult centre, may be seen as confirmation of this hypothesis.

Shang society lived in an advanced Bronze Age marked by a firmly settled mode of life, the existence of cities, and the separation of the crafts from farming. Shang farmers cultivated sorghum, barley, dif-

ferent kinds of millet and wheat, and a variety of hemp with edible seeds. It is not clear whether they mastered the cultivation of rice, and if they did, it must have been the variety which does not demand irrigation, as no signs of artificial irrigation have been discovered. Shang farmers also practised horticulture and grew vegetables, as well as mulberry trees for the silkworm. Weaving was done by women only. The division of labour between the sexes was very precise. Livestock-breeding was very important. Cattle, sheep and pigs were reared. Hunting figured prominently in the economy. Near Anyang, the bones of deer, tiger, bear, leopard, rhinoceros, buffalo, panther, antelope, elephant, wild boar, tapir, ape, fox, wolf, badger, and hare have been found. This list of wild animals alone shows that in those times the climate of northern China was much hotter and more humid, and both the flora and fauna were richer than today.

The technique of bronze casting was very advanced. Bronze was used to make ritual utensils (including large artifacts weighing nearly a ton), weapons, armour, details of chariots, partly also tools, although the latter were mostly of stone. Weapons, too, were to a considerable extent Neolithic (stone axes, spearheads and spear points). Artisans' blocks in the cities were crowded with numerous workshops of coppersmiths, stone masons, founders, potters, wood-workers, etc.

Trade was rudimentary, things were mostly bartered although there was also "money"—cowrie-shells and their bronze imitations. International exchange also existed, as testified by the use of the cowrie-shells, for one thing. They came from the sea-coast. Tin and copper came from the Yangtze basin, and jasper from Hsin-chiang. These were exchanged for the products of the Shang-Yin world, mostly of bronze, which in the north travelled along trade routes as far as Siberia.

The Shang people waged constant wars for the purpose of capturing booty—cattle, grain and especially prisoners of war, who were usually immediately sacrificed to the ancestors, sometimes fifteen hundred and more at a time. The Shang cults of mountains and rivers, and the holy marriage ritual, which formed part of the fertility cult, also demanded mass human sacrifices.

The Shang economic structure was based on extended-family communities united in larger

groups, usually, but not necessarily, on the clan principle—the unions might be territorial as well. The whole of the adult population took part in ritual feasts, in which as many as three or four hundred bulls might be slaughtered. The *wang*, as the supreme priest, was the principal giver of meat for the people. During the sacrifices, the most important items of Shang society's wealth were squandered headlessly, including domestic animals, bronze weapons and utensils, chariots with horses, cowrie-shells, gold and nephritis, agricultural produce, game killed during hunting, and prisoners of war. Such waste was a means of checking economic differentiation and the enrichment of some clans and noble families.

The *wang* was in charge of the estate belonging to the temple and the ruler. Work on that estate was not regarded as a kind of labour conscription but as socially useful joint labour, a part of the ritual magic rite intended to bring fertility to the country's fields. This work was done at the bidding of an oracle and at the time appointed by him. Enslaved captives, as well as the commoners, worked on the *wang*'s estate.

The *wang* led the commoners in war and during hunts. The Shangs were armed with bows and arrows, halberds, spears, battleaxes, and wore helmets, shields, and armour. Chariots were used during battles, with the driver standing in front, the archer to the left, and the spearman to the right. But the basis of the Shang army was the mass of commoners. Survivals of tribal democracy must have been very strong in Shang society, as indicated by the great role of the elders' council in the government, and possibly of the popular assembly in the urban community. The large public buildings discovered by archaeologists on the territory of the "City Shang" may be seen as proof of that.

Captured men were as a rule killed. Before mass sacrifices, special expeditions were organised to capture men. The Shang hieroglyph *fa* (the picture of a halberd cutting off a head) signified both "military expedition" and "human sacrifice". The sacrificial ritual prescribed the cutting off of the victim's head, and the skulls were usually buried in a heap in separate pits. An inscription has been preserved on a skull pierced by a spear: "To sacrifice (*fa*) the chieftain of the Jen tribe to the ancestor of Yi." Captured women were apparently enslaved and used as workers, especially in hoe farming, pottery-making,

weaving, wine-making and beer-brewing (the last two were important items of the sacrificial rituals), where they were the principal type of labour employed. But they were also widely used in battue hunts and during wars, the latter being rather similar to the former in the way they were conducted.

The differences in the grave goods and types of burial point to social inequality in Shang society. Enormous subterranean mausoleums were built for *wangs*, and thousands of human beings were sacrificed at their burials. Most graves were modest burials containing tools and, invariably, weapons. But there were also burials without any grave goods nearly at ground level. In some medium-sized tombs, several persons were killed and buried next to the master—an indication of the emerging private ownership of slaves. Mass burials and sacrifices of captives indicate, however, that slave labour did not play a great role in the economy.

Different views have been expressed about the nature of Shang-Yin society. It is variously assumed to have been the primitive communal society at the stage of matriarchate; a transitional one to a class society of the military democracy type; an advanced slave-owning society; or an early slave-owning society. According to the latest data, isolated fountainheads of early class civilisation belonging to different ethnos were evolving during the Shang-Yin epoch on Chinese territory, of which the Shang culture proved to be the most advanced one, becoming the centre of gravitation of a large area inhabited by a number of neighbouring communities.

In the late 11th century B. C. (in 1122, according to the tradition), the Shangs were conquered by the apparently related Chous who lived west of them (along the Wei river) and were at that time in the process of class formation. For a long time before the conquest, the Chous had been in contact with the Shangs, sometimes friendly and at other times hostile, paying them a tribute in men. At the head of an anti-Shang alliance the Chous defeated the army of the Yin coalition in the famous battle at Mu-yeh and established their sway over an extensive territory along the upper and middle course of the Hwang Ho and on the Great Plain. The conquerors' capital became the city of Hao on the Wei.

The period between 1122 and 771 is called the Western Chou in the Chinese tradition, as the Chou capital was later moved east. During the Shang-Yin

epoch, wars had mostly been in the nature of armed raids, whereas the Chous' campaigns aimed from the outset at capturing territories and pumping manpower out of them. The first Western Chou monarch Wuwang ("The Warrior King"; Chou rulers borrowed the title of *wang* from the Shangs) appealed to the warriors before the battle at Mu-yeh: "Brave warriors! Do not kill those that surrender, let them work on our western fields!" (*Shuching*, a collection of historical legends). The stanzas of an early Chou ode are permeated with the empire-building spirit: "The Heaven stretches far // But there is not an inch of land under the Heaven that is not the king's. // On the whole coast washed by the seas // Only the king's servants live on this land!" (*Shihching*, or a *Book of Odes*—an early Chinese poetic collection). Narrative sources recount that the Chous sent the "obstreperous Yins" to work on the construction of their second capital Ch'eng-chou; later they must have been used as slave labourers on the crown estate. Thirteen other Shang clans were enslaved and resettled on the possessions of Wuwang's close relatives.

In its structure, the Western Chou state resembled the Hittite empire, where the princes, governors, and other royal vassals owed their supreme ruler tribute and military assistance but ruled their territories independently. The territories seized by the Chous were either given to the Chou notables for them to govern and possess (*kuo*) or else left under their previous rulers or chieftains supervised by the Chou *wang's* "observers". According to the tradition, the Western house of the Chous had many hundreds of such vassals (*chuhou*)—one version puts that number at 1,800, of which 71 were members of the Chou royal clan. There are grounds to believe that these possessions were within the *wang's* jurisdiction and that *wang's* commissioners in the capital and in the provinces saw to it that a part of the *chuhou* income (especially grain) went to the royal treasury. The Chou *wang's* gifts of land did not imply his supreme ownership of it but rather stemmed from his state sovereignty over the country's territory. At the same time, the *wang* had his own royal lands which he gave out to private individuals, above all state officials; these lands were the appurtenances of their offices. The lands that went with an office gradually became hereditary, but their transmission in any case demanded the *wang's* formal confirmation,

and these acts were renewed at the accession of a new ruler to the throne. The legal instruments were in the shape of bronze vessels with texts inscribed on them; these texts did not stipulate the transmission of eternal rights to the lands but signified recognition of limited rights to the taxes collected from them.

The "king's subordinates" were given away with or without land. Bronze inscriptions provide evidence of gifts of men made by the *wang* and his spouse—up to a thousand at a time, both whole families and single individuals. These serfs, given away in such numbers, were undoubtedly employed as workers. The inscriptions list various categories of the "king's people", some of whom could even hold high offices but were not their own masters, all equally in the *wang*'s power in the eyes of their contemporaries. State slaves included convicts. The deed of settlement on one of the vessels lists "two hundred barefooted families in ginger tatters" (a symbol of shameful punishment). But the main source of slaves was wars. Thousands of prisoners were taken, and were entered in records to a man. An inscription on the Yükung vessel records 13,081 prisoners. The early Chou odes of the *Shihching* express terror at imminent slavery: "...pain and groans in my grieving heart: // Oh, our poor people! Without guilt // It will be made into slaves!" The state distributed the captives, hunted runaway slaves down and returned them to their owners. The *wang* had a force of his own, which was kept at the expense of the crown estate managed by "land supervisors" (*Xitu*) and tilled mostly by slaves, although free commoners were also employed there. The public legal functions of the ruler were not delimited from his private legal functions as owner.

At that period, the climate of north China became colder. Arable land was expanded by draining marshlands and forest clearance. The role of livestock-breeding fell. Urban settlements spread over a broad belt in eastern China from the northern steppes to the Yangtze. They were built along rivers and surrounded by rammed earth walls (the traditional technique of ancient Chinese fortification construction since the times of the early Neolithic), protecting them from the raids of the surrounding tribes and from floods. Their walls were not more than 700 to 800 metres in circuit, usually square or rectangular, the corners aligned on the cardinal points, with gates in the middle of each of the sides.

Judging from the *Book of Odes*, the territorial extended-family community was intact at the time; according to later data, these communities had collective organs of self-government. Their lands were divided into those that were tilled for the state (*kung-t'ien*) and private ones (*ssu-t'ien*), the latter apparently cultivated for the benefit of the communities themselves.

Individually owned estates, which were not part of any community, appeared. The serfs that tilled them were not always deprived of all rights, which indicates a comparatively early stage of slave-owning relations. Slaves became an important item of barter. The usual price of a slave was 20 skeins of silk. Taking into account the monthly allowances of silk (up to 30 skeins) to royal officials, it can be assumed that each of them had private slaves. The deals involving slaves, just as any other property, were recorded on bronze vessels. As the role of slave labour grew, especially in tillage, which remained a labour-consuming branch of the economy in the absence of the plough, mass sacrificial slaughter of slaves, so characteristic of the Shang epoch, ended. The struggle against human sacrifices would be a long one in China, and not always successful, but the first protest against that barbaric custom was ascribed to Chou-kung, the famous conqueror of the Shangs and founder of the Chou state administrative system, whose spirit, as the tradition records, "did not accept human sacrifices".

From the very beginning, the Chou state had to repulse the raids of surrounding tribes, and for quite a long time it coped with that task. As the separatist tendencies among the *Chuhous* grew, the authority of the *wang* declined (his title was "The Only One", as authentic inscriptions on bronze show). Chou rulers found it increasingly hard to beat off the onslaught of the nomadic tribes, especially in the north-west and south-east. In the 8th century, driven by these endless incursions from Central Asia, the Chous began to abandon their homeland along the Wei. In 771 B. C., after the *wang*'s army was routed by the nomads and the *wang* himself taken prisoner, the Chous moved their capital to Loyi (near Lo-yang). In the ancient Chinese tradition, this event marks the beginning of the Eastern Chou period (770-256 B. C.), its first half, when the country's political fragmentation was greatest, being called the Liehkuo period—the times of Individual States, or the Mul-



tistate epoch. In fact, it is from this period that a reliable chronology of events in China's history begins.

At the beginning of that period, some two hundred essentially independent political entities, mostly small urban communities, were scattered across the territory of the former Western Chou. Some of them were descendants of the Chous, others of the Yins. Politically and religiously, they accepted the nominal sacral power of the Chou *wang*, who was believed to possess magic omnipotence and regarded as the Son of Heaven. Compared to the Shang cults of ancestors and deification of various objects and forces of nature, the Chou cult of the Heaven as the supreme deity, and the Son of Heaven as its earthly embodiment, was supratribal and interethnic; it was compatible with all the local community cults but rose above all of them as a kind of unifying principle. Together with the doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven (*f'ienming*, or divine investiture), this cult sanctified the right of the Chou dynasty to rule all Under Heaven, or T'ienhsia, as the ancient Chinese called their country and the entire *oikoumenē*.

Apart from the kingdoms of the Chou cultural world, there were other states on the territory of modern China, by no means inferior to the former either in size or the level of cultural and historical development: Ch'u along the middle course of the Yangtze, Wu in the Yangtze delta, and Yüeh south of them, inhabited by peoples related to the ancestors of the Vietnamese, Chuang, Miao, Yao, Thai and other ancient peoples of South-East Asia. In the 7th century B. C., Ch'u was already one of the largest kingdoms of ancient China. Its rulers adopted the *wang* title and joined the fight over the hegemony in all Under Heaven at the head of a coalition of southern kingdoms.

Liehkuo was the peak of the Bronze Age. As the techniques of making bronze alloys improved, production of bronze tools increased. New offensive weapons appeared. The crossbow was invented in Ch'u, which had a complex trigger mechanism, whose design required the use of high quality bronze. Liehkuo was also the peak of the might of chariots as an armed force. At that time, chariot driving was one of the six highest arts of the Chou aristocracy.

Just as in the Western Chou period, Liehkuo rulers widely practised handing out lands to those who served them, ceding in fact the right to the taxes

coming from the communities. Formally, the allotments remained in the king's possession and could be taken back, but actually their ownership was already hereditary.

As communal ownership of land ceased to exist, land re-allotment was discontinued in many kingdoms, and land became the hereditary property of individual families. That changed the entire system of state alienation of surplus product from the main body of producers. The sources show that the system of collective cultivation of part of the community's land for the benefit of the king was replaced by a grain tax (usually not more than one-tenth of the harvest) from each family's field, first in the Lu kingdom (in 594) and later in Ch'u (in 548) and the other states. This was in fact the beginning of regular taxation of farmers, which also affected the nature of the communal organs of self-government. The mortgaging and alienation of farmsteads and kitchen-gardens became fairly widespread, although on the whole operations in land were not yet extensive. The enslavement of debtors came into practice, at first in the form of "adoption" and "children pawning". Significantly, *nupei*, the general term for slaves, appeared at that time and became standard in the centuries to come.

*The Warring States (5th-3rd centuries B.C.).* The mid-1st millennium B. C. marked the beginning of an epoch in the history of China in which significant changes took place in the basis and superstructure of ancient Chinese society. Traditionally, it is termed Chankuo, or "The Warring States". Iron smelting brought about an upheaval in industrial production. The process is first mentioned in a chronicle record in 513 B. C. to the effect that an iron tripod with a criminal code inscribed on it was cast in the Tsin state. That monument recorded an important landmark in the development of ancient China's sociopolitical structure – the assertion of the principle of centralised power and the introduction of written state legislation instead of the oral common law.

The Chankuo period was marked by the spreading of ploughing and artificial irrigation and the growth of specialised crafts – metallurgy (especially iron casting), weaving (notably of silk fabrics), pottery-making (particularly the making of pottery for technical uses), shipbuilding, carpentry, the making

of lacquered objects, jewelry, etc. Rice-fields were significantly extended, and leguminous plants were cultivated. Fertilisers were introduced. Commodity-money relations developed rapidly. Metal money came into circulation. A new social stratum of traders (*shangjen*) evolved. Hereditary aristocracy, which used to dominate the government of the kingdoms, began to give way to untitled men of property—"sons of rich families", or "upstarts from the lower ranks", as they were called in the sources. Records have preserved the names of well-to-do commoners, merchants and even slaves who became major public figures.

Despite the numerous destructive wars, the population grew very significantly. Especially densely populated was the ancient cultural region of the Great Plain in the north-west of Honan and the south of Hopei, as well as the basins of the rivers Fen (in Shansi), Wei (in Shensi) and Min (in Szechwan). Cities with a population of half a million arose, such as Lintzu, the capital of Ch'i. The retreat of the wild fauna was an indication of a rapid growth of the population. Mass cultivation of virgin soil was made possible by iron tools and large-scale hydraulic engineering projects involving whole river valleys. The latter could not be carried out either by separate groups of communities or small city-states; even major kingdoms could not tackle these tasks without implementing major political and administrative reforms and centralising the state apparatus. The economic need for the creation of large states, prompted by the needs of reproduction on an enlarged scale, could not be fulfilled by peaceful means and led to increased internecine strife and fierce fighting for supremacy. By the beginning of the 4th century B. C., seven strongest kingdoms of ancient China became most prominent—Ch'u, Ch'i, Han, Wei, Chao, Yen, Ch'in. Their lands stretched along the lower and middle courses of Hwang Ho and Yangtze, while the whole of north-western, north-eastern, south-western and almost the entire southern China was inhabited by tribes and peoples contemptuously called the "barbarians of the four quarters of the world" by the Central States, or Middle Kingdoms, as the ancient kingdoms of the Chou world belonging to the Huahsia cultural community began to call themselves. Particularly prominent became the outlying kingdoms of the "Seven Powers", including Ch'u of the south and Ch'in

of the north-west, which were not included by the Chou tradition among the Huahsia "Central States" claiming absolute cultural supremacy. These two states played an increasing role in the major events of the epoch, finally becoming the principal claimants to dominion over the whole of ancient China.

In the 5th-3rd centuries B. C., the military organisation of the kingdoms underwent significant changes. The ancient aristocratic armed force of charioteers was replaced (in the outlying kingdoms earlier than in the others) by infantry units armed with crossbows—powerful weapons unequalled in the whole of the ancient world. By the 3rd century B. C., infantry (crossbowmen, archers, spearmen) became the nucleus of ancient Chinese armies, while cavalry, first created in the northern kingdom of Chao after the model of the nomads' mounted forces, now included the crack units. The character of the wars changed. Previously, the issue of a battle would be decided in two or three days, while now battles became long drawn-out. Sieges of fortresses lasted for years. Mighty walls were erected as defences against external enemies. The army provided manpower—the prisoners of war—for the state works and the gigantic irrigation, land melioration and construction projects begun at the time.

In agriculture, the free farmer, the commoner, remained the principal figure. Each communal household regularly paid the state land-taxes. The farmers were frequently recruited for public works and military service, in which not less than one-tenth of the free male population was permanently engaged due to the endless wars. Commodity-money relations were now extended to operations in land. Gradually, the community became a self-governing group of landowners whose right to land was determined by their membership in the community. Differentiation in wealth among commoners increased sharply. The class of near landless commoners appeared; as the sources aptly put it, "they had no place where they could stick an awl".

Many private large-scale estates and craftsmen's workshops whose products were mainly intended for the market were set up at this period. Private slave-owning received a powerful stimulus for development. We have records of rich men from different kingdoms who used many hundreds of slaves in their workshops and on their estates. The expression the

"pitiful toil of a slave" was now used in the sources to signify an utterly hard lot. Private slaves were acquired by purchase, brigandage, or war. Just as in Greece, foreigners were regarded as natural slaves. Along with community differentiation, enslavement of impoverished free commoners became an increasingly important source of privately owned slaves.

Although the rate of the disintegration of communal relations and the development of private ownership and slave-owning in different kingdoms varied, it was these processes that became everywhere the source of increasingly acute social contradictions, of which the symptoms were uprisings, coups, and external aggression.

In terms of societal typology, the ancient Chinese states of the Warring States period, just as the subsequent empires Ch'in and Earlier Han, can be referred to the stage of advanced slave-owning relations.

*The Ideology and Culture of Ancient China in the 5th-3rd Centuries B.C.* The great advances in the division of labour, especially in the separation between mental and physical labour, brought about the emergence at this period of philosophy in the proper sense of the word, and of its carriers, the intellectuals of the times—wise men and politicians wandering from state to state. That "spiritual elite" came from various backgrounds, even from among slaves, and broke out of the confines of the interests of the separate kingdoms. Its appearance was an indication of profound changes in the superstructure of society. The principal ideological trends of ancient China—Confucianism, Taoism, Legalism, and Mohism—emerged in that period.

Confucianism evolved in the late 6th and early 5th centuries. It was founded by Kung-tzu (Confucius, 551-479 B.C., "the teacher Kung", later deified), a scion of an impoverished aristocratic clan of the Lu kingdom. He disseminated his ideas through conversations with disciples. Confucius's maxims are said to have been recorded as they were remembered by his pupils, and made up the book called *Lunyü* (The Analects). According to Confucius, each individual had to occupy a strictly determined place in the immutable social and world structure. Confucianism demanded strict discipline and subordination within a rigid social hierarchy: the son impli-

citly obeyed the father and respected him above all other men, the father obeyed his superior, and so on even to the ruler and supreme head of state, the Chou Son of Heaven. Only the Son of Heaven had the prerogative of interpreting the sacred Will of Heaven. Defending the patriarchal basis of early class society, Confucianism condemned personal enrichment undermining the hierarchical principle of nobility. It demanded strict observance of traditions, rites and magic rituals. Later, Confucianists created their canonic literature, which included the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (the chronicle of the Lu kingdom said to have been compiled by Confucius), the *Book of Changes* (a record of texts used in divination), the *Book of Odes* (a collection of ancient folk-songs), and the *Book of History* (a collection of historical legends). The philosophical problems of Confucianism were worked out by Confucius's pupil Mengtzu (372-289 B.C.), also a native of Lu. Memories of communal democracy were echoed in Mengtzu's idealisation of the ancient system of land-tenure (*ching'ien*) and his recognition of the people's right to an uprising, provided Heaven itself takes away its mandate from the ruler. The aristocratic morality of Confucianism was clearly manifested in the doctrine of ritual worked out by Hsüntzu (313-238 B.C.). Unlike Confucius, Hsüntzu accepted the need for laws in a state, but he insisted on "law for the people, and ritual for the aristocracy". Hsüntzu argued that social and economic inequality was rooted in man's very nature and demanded strict observance of differences between the noblemen and the common people in everything—from clothes to property qualifications. Like Plato and Xenophon, Hsüntzu regarded hereditary division of labour as the basic principle of state structure.

Unlike Confucianism, which was on the whole metaphysical in spirit, the thinking of the Taoists in that epoch was spontaneously dialectical. The basic category of that doctrine was Tao (Way). According to the tradition, the founder of Taoism was Laotzu, a wise man from the Ch'u state, Confucius's elder contemporary, said to be the author of the philosophical treatise *Taoteching* (presumably recorded in the 4th or 3rd century B.C.). The social ideal of ancient Taoism was a return to primitive simplicity and equality within the community. Taoists never defended slaves, believing slavery to be a natural attribute of society, but they always sharply con-

demned the enslavement of compatriots. Taoists were against riches and luxury, against excessive requisitions and wars, which reduced the people to a state of abject poverty, and against rulers' violence and noblemen's abuses. "The Tao of the perfectly wise is action without violence," was the recurrent theme of the *Taoteching*. The Taoists recognised the eternal quality of Tao interpreted as nature, the objective reality of the world, and rejected the deification of Heaven and of the Will of Heaven, believing heaven to be as much part of nature as earth. In general, however, Laotzu did not negate the existence of gods, regarding them as the issue of Tao. The Taoist thinker Liehtzu (5th-4th centuries) expounded certain views concerning the origin and development of the universe and the evolution of life on the earth from the simplest organisms to man. Liehtzu's theory of matter was similar to the atomistic notions. Two first elements, *ch'i* (ether) and *chi* (seeds), were posited as material substance. "The entire multitude of things comes out of tiny seeds and returns to them." The same proposition was developed by the Taoist Chuangtzu (369-286), who was also greatly intrigued by the problem of life and death. Chuangtzu proposed a materialist solution of that problem: "The human soul disappears with the death of the body." That brilliant philosopher saw the universe as "an immense crucible", and interpreted Tao as the essence of being, the substantial basis of the world, the absolute unifying principle giving birth to all things endlessly changing in the eternal cyclic movement of natural phenomena. Life itself was endless movement. The universality of change and the transition of phenomena into their opposites made all qualities relative. "The life of a thing is similar to a fast race, it changes with every moment of motion." Chuangtzu has been compared to Heraclitus, but the great Greek's idea about the struggle of opposites was alien to him. Chuangtzu rejected the division of men into "noble" and "insignificant", passionately denouncing the parasite Confucius in the words of Chih the Robber, his favourite hero; "You wily liar from the kingdom of Lu, you do not plough yet you eat, neither do you weave yet you wear clothes; in your foolhardiness you have invented filial respect, soliciting rulers for riches and titles... There is no greater robber than you! Why do they call me and not you the Robber in Under Heaven, Confucius?" Chuangtzu's aphorism, "He

who steals a hook gets the axe, he who steals a throne gets the kingdom" became a proverb. The natural-philosophical views and the broad ethical principles of Taoism attracted the sympathies of both the common people and members of the ruling class, who often interpreted the doctrine of "inaction" in a purely individualistic spirit.

The adherents of the philosophy of Mo Ti (Mo-tzu; 5th-4th centuries) took up positions intermediate between those of the Confucianists and the Taoists. The Mohists recognised the divine Will of Heaven interpreting it as the human carrier of the principles of their doctrine. Unlike the Confucianists, the Mohists asserted that the Will of Heaven was cognisable, and that man's fate was not predetermined but depended on him alone. Rejecting the Confucian view of innate apriori knowledge and Taoist speculative cognition, the Mohists, just as the Legalists, believed sensations to be the only source of cognition, thus accepting the solution of this epistemological problem in the spirit of naive materialism. The Mohist school attached great importance to empirical natural-scientific observation. "Knowledge that cannot be applied in practice is false," taught the Mohists. Following that principle, they laid the foundations of physical knowledge and developed logical, mathematical, and engineering theories.

Mo Ti himself came from a family of poor craftsmen and may even have been a slave. The lower urban elements were active members of his school. "A just man does not shun the poor and the beggars," Mo Ti taught. His sympathies were with the common people—farmers, craftsmen, traders—for whom he demanded equality with the aristocracy, equal opportunities in matters of government, and abolition of the system of inheriting offices and ranks of nobility. Mo Ti stressed the importance of manual labour, believing it to be obligatory for all citizens without exception. In contradistinction to Confucian contempt for physical labour and invention, and the Taoist theory of inaction, Mo Ti attached great importance to the creative principle in man's activity. Mo Ti extended his doctrine of social justice and equality for free men to embrace the religious and ideological sphere, so important in the eyes of his contemporaries. Confucianists defended the aristocracy's absolute right to the ancestor cult, refusing that right to the common peo-

ple. "They who earn their living by their toil have no right to their ancestors' temples," declared Hsüntzu. Mo Ti's assertion that both the aristocrats and the common people were carriers of ritual challenged Confucian aristocratic morality. At the same time Mo Ti sharply objected to the Confucian rites of magnificent funerals and three-year mourning. With his doctrine of "universal love and mutual benefit", Mo Ti preached a humane attitude to people regardless of their social position, as opposed to the Confucian principle of *jen* (love of fellow men) which assumed a gap between the higher and the lower, the governing and the governed, the noble and the lowly.

Slaves, male and female, were constantly used as examples in the Mohists' logical teaching, yet, being outside civic society, they were naturally not taken into account in the Mohist projects for political reforms intended only for the free. The Mohist school was stronger than any of the others in organisation, uniformity, and numbers. Its propositions were in some respects close to the ideas of urban self-government of slave-owning democracy. Mohists obeyed a semblance of Rules, they dressed as the common people, studied the techniques of city defence and the basics of fortification, and demanded active resistance to the enemy in defending the native city. The Mohists were believed to be without equal in the art of debate.

The most important representatives of the Legalist school were Shang Yang (executed in the kingdom of Ch'in in 338 B. C.) and Han Feitzu (poisoned in the Ch'in state in 233 B. C.). The Legalist trend came into existence almost simultaneously with Confucianism and Taoism (in the 7th and 6th centuries). The Legalists gave a materialist interpretation of Tao as the natural path of the development of the universe, leaving no place for the supernatural forces and fate. Han Feitzu sharply opposed the worshipping of gods and spirits, and the making of sacrifices. In Legalism, world-view problems were entirely subordinated to the concrete tasks of government, forming the theoretical basis of reforms implemented in some kingdoms. The core of the Legalists' socio-political theories were the obligatory laws (*fa*), the same for all, aimed at defending private property and at asserting the ruler's absolute personal power. Insisting that law should be open to the public, the Legalists demanded harsh penalties for the least vio-

lations of it, saying that "there were no recalcitrant slaves in a strict family". The Legalists were against the privileges of the old aristocracy and demanded state centralisation and introduction of courts presided over by royal officials. The Legalists' political structure, most fully expressed by Han Feitzu, anticipated the idea of the future imperial state.

In principle, the Legalists were in favour of ending wars between the kingdoms through their unification in a powerful empire, but they believed a peaceful achievement of that goal to be unreal. Shang Yang declared external aggression to be the state's principal objective, and established a regime of military-bureaucratic despotism in the Ch'in state.

The first Legalists were in favour of the development of commodity-money relations and even assigned a respectable position in society to men engaged in trade. However, as their political plans took a more concrete shape, the Legalists began to include private trade, along with the crafts, among the "five worms gnawing at the foundations of the state" (the Confucians were also one of these), opposing them to the principal occupations of the population—farming and the military profession ensuring the success of conquests. With a view to these same objectives, the Legalists attached great importance to the state's economic functions, insisting on the state authorities' interference in the economy, control over and regulation of trade, organisation of compulsory exchange, and state monopoly of the exploitation of natural resources.

In that period, the Confucians on the whole reflected the interests of old hereditary aristocracy, Taoism expressed the passive protest and aspirations of the commoners' masses, and Mohism apparently embodied the ideas of municipal self-government, while the Legalists were the ideologists of the rising propertied nobility, which owed its ascendancy to advanced forms of slave-owning, and of the new bureaucracy.

Prominent among the philosophers of the Warring States was Yang Chu (414-334 B. C.), a major thinker, materialist and atheist who came from a family of modest commoners. His teaching was fiercely attacked by the Confucianists, Taoists and Legalists alike, but its influence was particularly strong. Yang Chu taught that man consisted of the same elements as nature, differing from the other living beings only in that he had intellect. Yang Chu's



materialistic worldview rejected the fear of gods and of death. There was no immortality, death was a natural occurrence in the face of which all men were equal. Yang Chu rejected the supranatural essence of Heaven and divine interference in the affairs of men, and denounced the ancestor cult. He called on men to enjoy this earthly life, to take care of their well-being without relying on the gods, to satisfy reasonably their needs and desires, and to be indifferent to the inevitability of death, thus following the natural law of Tao. Yang Chu's opponents declared his individualism to be against the state interest. Yang Chu's ideal was a carefree and tranquil life, not one of vigorous activity. "What is the difference between a fettered captive and someone incapable of enjoying a carefree moment?" he exclaimed. His philosophy expressed the mood of those sections of the public which believed involvement in contemporary political life useless and therefore avoided it.

During the Warring States epoch, the first poetic works by individual authors appeared. The great Ch'ü Yüan (340-278 B. C.), generally recognised as the first Chinese poet, lived and worked in the Ch'u state. His lyrical and tragic poems were renowned for their exquisite elegance of form and content, and their wealth of picturesque mythological images. Ch'ü Yüan passionately appealed for the unification of all the kingdoms against the Ch'in state, the enemy of his native Ch'u. Because of intrigues at the court of the Ch'u ruler he fell into disfavour and was banished from the capital. In exile, he created his famous poem on *Encountering Sorrow*. Wandering through the Celestial palaces in a chariot drawn by eight dragons, the poet bitterly complained of solitude, the injustice of his disgrace, and treacherousness of his friends. "How dirty is the world! There is not a man in the whole country! All is over!" Those were the words with which the poet ended his confession, thinking of suicide. According to the tradition, the old poet drowned himself on learning of the victory of the Ch'in state over Ch'u. Ch'ü Yüan's works formed the basis of the new song genre of *fu*—lyrical and lyrico-epic odes with prosaic introductions.

Another major Ch'u poet, Sung Yü (290-223 B. C.), also wrote in the elegiac genre and developed the ode form. Unlike the mournful and pessimistic poetry of Ch'ü Yüan, Sung Yü's lyrics were full of the joy of life. He is regarded as the first Chinese poet

who sang the praises of love and female beauty. Sung Yü's works laid the beginning of secular poetry in China.

*The Empire of Ch'in and Earlier Han (Late 3rd Century B. C.-Early 1st Century A. D.).* At the beginning of the 4th century B. C., the outlying north-western Ch'in state rapidly outstripped the other Warring States. Major irrigation projects were carried out on the river Wei, which brought about a manifold increase in agricultural production. At the end of the 4th century, only the Ch'u state had a greater population than Ch'in. Under king Hsiaokung (361-338), the philosopher Shang Yang was made head of the civil and military administration and carried out important reforms: he introduced a single legal code throughout the country, legalised the mortgaging and buying of land, abolished limitations on the size of land allotments (thus facilitating the disintegration of communal links), undertook a direct attempt to break up large families by imposing double, treble, and even greater taxes on estates which remained undivided after the patriarch's death (according to the number of brothers living together), and banned blood feuds. Shang Yang's laws protected the interests of rich commoners who broke with the community, and encroached on community land-tenure. In his administration, the might of the hereditary noble clans was undermined by a uniform administrative division of the state into territorial units—from districts to groups of ten or five households tied by the obligation of mutual guarantee. In cases of an offence by a single member of a mutually responsible group of households, they all became state slaves. Shang Yang's unification of weight, length and volume measures, and his monetary reform, stimulated the development of commodity-money relations. Instead of a crop-tax, Shang Yang introduced taxation of the area of cultivated land, thus shifting the burden of the treasury's losses from natural disasters on to the farmer's shoulders. Shang Yang relied on the new nobility, whose ascendancy was due to ownership of land and slaves rather than noble origin. He introduced twenty ranks of nobility awarded for personal, mostly military, deserts, which also determined the property qualifications—the number of fields and slaves to which the rank's owners were entitled.



Soon, these ranks were freely bought and sold. In the army, Shang Yang disbanded the charioteer units, the basis of the military power of hereditary aristocracy, and introduced cavalry instead. Bronze weapons were replaced by iron ones. Only the state had the right to make weapons. As a result of Shang Yang's reforms, the Ch'in army became one of the most efficient among the forces of the ancient Chinese states. After Hsiaokung's death, the old aristocracy, removed from positions of authority, pressed Shang Yang's execution, but his reforms remained in force.

Having built up Ch'in's military power, Ch'in rulers adopted in 325 the title of *wang*. After the capture of fertile Szechuan with its mineral resources, the Ch'in state became the strongest in China. Skillfully taking advantage of the inner conflicts of the ancient Chinese states and their constant strife, the Ch'in *wangs* captured one territory after another and, following a fierce struggle, subjugated all the other kingdoms of ancient China, including Chou. In 222, Ch'u, Ch'in's main rival and the largest of all the kingdoms, was conquered. In 221, Ch'in brought to heel Ch'i, the last independent state on the Shantung peninsula. After that, the Ch'in's king did not only adopt the former title of the Chou *wangs*, Son of Heaven (T'ienhsia) – in violation of all the ancient traditions, he selected an entirely new title for designating supreme power – *huangti*, or emperor. The first emperor of ancient China went down in history as Ch'in Shihhuangti, "The First Emperor of Ch'in". The Ch'in capital Hsien-yang on the river Wei (modern Hsi-an) became the capital of the empire. Having conquered the Chinese states, Ch'in Shihhuangti continued his expansion in the north and south. Conquests and colonisation were the main theme of the First Emperor's foreign policy. All private weapons in the country were confiscated. Ch'in Shihhuangti's vast standing army had iron weapons and was reinforced by cavalry. At that time, a powerful tribal alliance of the Hsiungnu people was growing with amazing rapidity on the northern borders of the empire. During their incursions into China they took thousands of prisoners leaving terribly devastated country behind. A Ch'in army of 300,000 defeated the Hsiungnu people and pushed them back beyond the bend of the Hwang Ho. To secure the northern frontier of the empire, Ch'in Shihhuangti ordered an immense fortification

structure to be built that came to be known as the Great Wall, linking up and greatly expanding the chain of defences previously built by the separate kingdoms along their northern borders. The walls between the separate kingdoms within the country were razed. At the same time Ch'in Shihhuangti campaigned in south China and north-western Vietnam, where his armies temporarily subdued the ancient Vietnamese states of Namviet and Aulac at the cost of enormous losses.

Ch'in Shihhuangti extended Shang Yang's reform throughout the country, creating a strong centralised empire headed by a despot and a vast bureaucratic mechanism. The Ch'in conquerors occupied a privileged position in it, filling all the highest offices in the state. The laws of the Ch'in state, to which harsh clauses on penal law were added, and a unified legal procedure were introduced throughout the country. The hieroglyphic script was unified and simplified. The empire was divided into administrative units – provinces and districts – without regard for the former political and ethnic boundaries. Local cults were resolutely suppressed and state ones, the same for all, implanted. The civic name Black Heads was adopted by law as obligatory for all the subjects of the empire. Ch'in Shihhuangti's measures were implemented in a harsh, purposeful and undeviating manner. Terror reigned throughout the country; anyone expressing discontent was liable to be executed together with their entire clan. A great many people were enslaved in accordance with the mutual guarantee laws. The numbers of state slaves swelled hugely, absorbing masses of prisoners of war and those condemned by the courts. "Ch'in set up markets of slaves in the pens, along with the cattle; it ruled over its subjects, holding their lives in its hands," report ancient Chinese authors, seeing this as probably the main cause of the rapid fall of the Ch'in dynasty. Endless military expeditions to remote lands, construction of the Great Wall, of irrigation systems, roads throughout the empire, cities, numerous palaces and temples, and finally, of a stupendous tomb for Ch'in Shihhuangti, involved colossal expenditure of manpower and loss of life. State slaves were driven to construction sites in hundreds of thousands, and still there was not enough of them, despite the constant influx. The entire working population of Black Heads had to carry an enormous burden of labour conscriptions. In 216, Ch'in Shih-

huangti issued a decree ordering the Black Heads to report immediately on the lands they owned, and introduced an exceptionally hard land-tax sometimes amounting to two-thirds of the farmers' income. Masses of people sometimes headed by their councils of elders ran away to escape taxes and tributes; they were hunted down and sent to the outlying provinces to colonise new lands. In 210, Ch'in Shih-huangti suddenly died at the age of 48. Thousands of slaves were killed and buried together with him in the huge burial palace. Immediately after his death, popular unrest flared up in the empire. One of the rebel leaders, a former headman of a small village, was declared emperor and became the founder of the new Han dynasty. This dynasty is divided into two periods, the Earlier (or Former) Han (202 B.C.-A.D. 8) and Later Han (A.D. 25-220).

Beginning with the mid-1st millennium B. C., various ethnic elements inhabiting the Hwang Ho and middle Yangtze regions interacted, the interaction resulting in the ethnogenesis of the Huahsia ethnic entity and, on the basis of the latter, in the ethnocultural complex of the "central states". But as late as the 3rd century B. C. the moulding of the ancient Chinese cultural and ethnic community had not yet been completed—neither the common ethnic self-consciousness nor a generally accepted self-appellation existed at that time. The political unification of ancient China within the centralised Ch'in empire was a powerful catalyst for the consolidation of the ancient Chinese ethnos. Despite the brevity of the existence of the Ch'in empire, its name became the principal ethnic self-appellation of the ancient Chinese in the next four hundred years, i. e., the Han period. As the ethnonym of the ancient Chinese, "Ch'in" was borrowed into the neighbouring languages and became the basis for most of the modern names of China: cf. German "China", French "Chine", and English "China". But the self-appellation of the Chinese people, the one that is still in use—the "Hanjen", comes from the name of the Han empire, although it was adopted after its fall.

Coming to power on the crest of an anti-Ch'in uprising, Liu Pang began by abolishing the harsh laws of the Ch'in empire but was compelled to leave some of the taxes in force. Certain privileges were given to the organs of communal self-government. The Ch'in administrative division and most statutes in the economic sphere remained in force, too. Liu

Pang legalised the sale of free men to private individuals as slaves, and took no measures to restrict land deals, which immediately resulted in the growth of private land- and slave-ownership. The prevailing political situation made Liu Pang violate the principle of strict centralisation by handing out gifts of land to his associates and relatives along with the title of *wang*, which now became the highest aristocratic title. The *wangs* minted their own coin, concluded external alliances, and became involved in internal rebellions. Fighting their separatism became the principal task in the domestic policy of Liu Pang's successors. The power of the *wangs* was ultimately shattered under Emperor Wuti (140-87 B. C.).

The centralisation and consolidation of the empire in the first decades of the Earlier Han dynasty formed the basis for a further growth of the country's well-being, facilitating the progress in farming, crafts and trade, as the sources unanimously indicate.

Gradually, the country recovered from the consequences of many years of intestine strife which accompanied the fall of the Ch'in empire. Irrigation systems were repaired, and new ones built; labour productivity increased, especially in the crafts and above all in metallurgy, where slave labour was widely used. Private owners employed up to a thousand slave labourers in mines and workshops (foundries, textile factories, etc.). After Wuti introduced state monopoly of salt, iron, and wine production and the minting of coin, major state-owned industrial enterprises appeared. The number of cities with a population of more than 50 thousand, mostly traders and craftsmen, grew, and they became part of societal life. City-building was most intense in the central part of the Great Plain (in Honan). But most towns were small settlements surrounded by rammed-earth walls and fields, where several communities (*li*) lived. These were the typical basic administrative units of the empire, where organs of communal self-government—a characteristic feature of ancient Chinese urban culture—functioned.

In agriculture, free farmers made up the main bulk of the producers. They paid land-tax (from one-fifteenth to one-thirtieth of the harvest), poll-tax, and hearth-money. Men were also conscripted to work a month a year for three years and to serve in the army for two years, plus three days of annual

garrison service. According to law, it was possible to avoid labour and military conscription by paying off the state in money, grain or slaves. Well-to-do farmers could easily manage that; continual extraordinary and additional taxes and requisitions, special conscriptions, etc., did not bother these farmers much—but they were a serious handicap for the rank-and-file commoners. Small-lot households especially suffered from having to pay taxes in money, as they could spare but little for the market. Creditors took away as much as a half of their produce. “Nominally, the land-tax constitutes one-thirtieth of the harvest, but actually farmers are deprived of half of it,” reports *The History of the Former Han Dynasty*. Many ruined farmers lost their lands and were enslaved by creditors. The process assumed the proportions of a social problem. “The treasury is getting poorer,” reported officials, “while rich men and traders enslave poor men for their debts and store wealth in their barns”, “How can the common people stand up for themselves when rich men increase the number of slaves, expand their fields, and hoard wealth?”, “Farmers work all year round without rest, but when the time of collecting taxes comes, the well-to-do sell grain at half price while the poor men borrow at a double interest rate—so that many sell their fields and houses to pay their debts, and they sell their sons and grandsons”. Attempts to restrain usurers by pressure from above, and thus to stop the ruin and enslavement of farmers—the bulk of the empire’s taxpayers—were unsuccessful. Selling oneself, and enslavement of insolvent debtors, became important sources of private slave-owning, which especially flourished at that time. Any well-to-do family could buy slaves. There was a permanent slave market in the country. Slaves could be bought in nearly every city, as any commodity in great demand. Just like cattle, they were counted “on the fingers of one’s hand”. Parties of fettered slaves were driven by slave-traders across hundreds of kilometres to Ch’ang-an and other major cities of the country. Slavery constituted the basis of production in industry, both private and state-owned. Though to a lesser extent, slave labour was everywhere used in agriculture, as indicated in particular by mass confiscations in all parts of the empire of fields and slaves owned by persons violating the 119 B. C. law on property taxation. That law did not apply to privileged land- and slave-owners, official-

dom, military aristocracy, and, significantly, the *sanlao*, the richer commoners—a proof of deep-going class differentiation in the communities.

Under Wuti, the Han empire became a strong centralised bureaucratic state, one of the most populous on the continent. The expansionist policy of the ancient Chinese empire at that time was aimed at capturing other countries’ territories, subjugation of neighbouring peoples, supremacy on the international trading routes, and extension of external markets.

The empire’s external position was for a long time determined by a threat from the north, from the powerful “nomadic empire” of the Hsiungnu. After Liu Pang was nearly captured in 198, during a raid of the Hsiungnu, the emperors of the Middle Kingdom (as the whole of the country was called by that time, while its people were called “the people of the Middle Kingdom”, *chungkuo jen*, as they still are) had to pay an annual tribute in silk and agricultural produce and send their chieftains, the *shanyüs*, Han princesses for wives. But the nomads’ raids into China did not cease. Wuti initiated a policy of active confrontation with the Hsiungnu; with this aim in view he reorganised the army, introducing heavily armed cavalry in combination with light cavalry and infantry armed with crossbows. In 123, after bloody battles, Han armies managed to repulse the Hsiungnu, driving them away from the empire’s northern borders. Consolidating their positions there, Wuti’s armies continued for nearly half a century to drive the Hsiungnu tribes far into the Gobi desert. At the same time Wuti waged endless aggressive wars against Viet states in the south, finally conquering them in 111. After that, the naval and land Han forces attacked the ancient Korean state of Chao-Hsien and made it acknowledge the Han dynasty’s supremacy.

Having expanded and consolidated the empire, Wuti then brought down the whole might of the Han state machine on the Tien Shan and Pamir peoples. In 138, the Warrior Emperor (as the Wuti temple name is translated) sent Ch’ang Ch’ien, a diplomat and strategist, to the Kushan tribes in Central Asia hostile to the Hsiungnu, guided by the tested method of ancient Chinese diplomacy of “subduing barbarians with barbarian hands”. The Kushans did not succumb to the intrigues of the Han ambassador, but Ch’ang Ch’ien’s reconnaissance

activities surpassed Wuti's wildest expectations. Ch'ang Ch'ien opened a whole new world of foreign culture to Han China. He went to Tahsia (Bactria), K'angchü (Khorasmia), and Tawan (Ferghana), where he saw with his own eyes the "heavenly steeds", Wuti's most coveted prize. Ch'ang Ch'ien made inquiries among the local traders concerning Anhsi (Parthia) and Shentu (India), and they informed him that they knew of the "Ch'in country" as the land where silk came from, and that foreign merchants willingly traded in silk. His reports on each of the foreign lands were specific and to the point: position, the size of territory, natural resources, the population's occupations, and military strength. From that moment, Wuti set himself the strategic task of "conquering Tahsia and other countries of the west as external tributaries", and of asserting Han hegemony on the Silk Route, which began to function intensely at that time. For nearly a quarter of a century the ruling circles of the Han empire used all kinds of military and diplomatic pressure to penetrate into western Asia and seize the flourishing oases of the city-states of eastern Turkistan along the northern and southern branches of the Silk Route—the only transcontinental international route of that time, stretching across seven thousand kilometres from Ch'ang-an through the lands of the Kushans and Parthians to Roman Syria.

International trade was growing more vigorous along that route. Caravans were travelling in an endless train, so that "one caravan never lost sight of the other", as historian Ssuma Ch'ien, an eyewitness of those events, wrote. Traders were bringing from China iron, believed to be "the best in the world", nickel, precious metals, lacquered ware, bronze mirrors and other arts and crafts products. But *ssu*, or raw silk, made up the bulk of the trade; from the name of that commodity, which was in great demand, ancient China came to be known in the Graeco-Roman world as the country of the Sins, although antique geographers did not place the "country of silk" further east than Kansu. Wild and domesticated animals and birds were brought to China from foreign lands, as well as valuable varieties of wood, rare plants, furs, perfumes, spices, jewelry, glassware, tapestry and other luxury goods, and, of course, skilful slaves from overseas. Of special importance were plants from western Asia, including vines, beans, and alfalfa.

However, the arrival of foreign ambassadors was regarded by the Son of Heaven as an expression of submission to the empire, and the goods brought to Ch'ang-an, as barbarians' tribute. Reformed Confucianism, recognised as a state religion by Wuti, proclaimed the doctrine of absolute superiority of the Middle Kingdom as the hub of the universe over the surrounding world of "outer barbarians", whose failure to obey the Son of Heaven was regarded as a crime. The campaigns of the Son of Heaven, the sacred giver of order to the universe, were regarded as punitive, and contacts in foreign policy referred to criminal law. The countries of the Western Regions (as eastern Turkistan was called) were pressured into "paying tribute" through gifts from the Han court and the military force of Han garrisons stationed in the fortresses along the river Tarim which were quickly built here on Wuti's orders after the expulsion of the Hsiungnu from Kansu in 121-119 and its colonisation. The cities of the Western Regions often rejected the "gifts of the Son of Heaven", correctly assessing them as crude attempts to interfere in their affairs and deprive them of the advantages of transit trade. Han ambassadors were particularly active in Ferghana, which held key positions along an important part of the Silk Route and bred pure-blood "heavenly steeds", the stately horses of the western breed which were of the greatest importance for Wuti's heavily armed cavalry. The people of Tawan stubbornly resisted the solicitations of the Han court, "hiding the horses and refusing to give them to the Han ambassadors" (Ssuma Ch'ien). In 104, a vast army went on a "punitive expedition" against the city of Erhshi (the capital of Ferghana) led by the general Li Kuangli, granted in advance the title of "Erhshi conqueror". The campaign lasted two years and ended in utter failure. In 102 Wuti undertook yet another gigantic expedition to Ferghana. This time he captured some "heavenly steeds", but conquering Tawan proved to be beyond the empire's strength. The campaigns in Ferghana, which strained the empire's resources to the extreme, ended, as Wuti admitted himself, in a complete failure of Han aggression in the west. The political dominion of Han China over eastern Turkistan proved to be unstable, frequently interrupted and limited in character. The more unbiased of the historiographers doubted the need for Han expansion in western Asia, pointing out its negative conse-

quences for these countries and especially for China. "The Han dynasty aspired to take possession of the remote Western Regions and thereby brought the empire to exhaustion," wrote the author of an early medieval history of China.

After Wuti's death further active foreign policy became impossible for the empire because of aggravated internal conflicts. The first popular movements in the Han empire flared up already at the end of Wuti's reign. In the last quarter of the 1st century B. C., a wave of slave rebellions at state iron mines swept across the country. Soberly assessing the critical situation in the empire, many statesmen saw its cause in the growth of large-scale land- and slave-ownership. Under emperor Aiti (6-1 B. C.), an attempt was made to set a limit on land estates (not more than 140 hectares) and the number of slaves that could be owned: 30 slaves for the common people and petty officials, and 200 for high officials and noblemen (not counting slaves older than 60 and younger than 10); it was suggested to set state slaves older than 50 free. That draft edict stirred up protests among slave-owners and was never implemented, and neither was the next one of A. D. 3, although it limited only the common people's rights to slave- and land-ownership. These edicts apparently reflected the positions of the ideologues of petty and medium owners. After the failure of the policy of reforms, uprisings broke out in the country again.

In A. D. 8, power was seized by Wang Mang, a relation of the dynasty on the distaff side, who declared himself the founder of a dynasty of his own called Hsin (New). Wang Mang's ideological inspirers were the followers of the Confucian "old texts" school, hostile to the mystic "new texts" school recognised by Wuti and his successors as an official doctrine. To enlist the support of the broad masses, Wang Mang announced the restoration of the blessed order of the olden times and of the Chou system of community land-tenure (*chingt'ien*). He promised to restore equal land allotments and hand over the surplus of land to commoners who had little or no land. Naturally that promise could not be carried out. Wang Mang banned the sale and purchasing of land and slaves, declaring all privately owned lands to be state-owned (*wangt'ien*), or "crown lands"), and all the privately owned slaves to be "privately dependent" (*ssushu*), that is, apparently, within the jurisdiction of the state but in the posses-

sion of their masters. State ownership of slaves was not restricted. Far from it: all those guilty of violating Wang Mang's laws, together with other members of the mutually responsible groups of five households, were made state slaves. Simultaneously, Wang Mang endeavoured to strengthen the state's police functions and make all loan operations the treasury's monopoly. Wang Mang's reforms led to an extreme increase in the state's despotic pressure, causing a general uprising. Wang Mang tried to save the situation by declaring the abolition of all his laws, but it was all in vain.

Groups of ruined commoners, slaves, and former farm-hands were active throughout the country, assuming various names like Green Woodsmen, Copper Horses, Great Lances, Iron Shins, Black Calves, etc. Especially great in scope was the movement of Red Eyebrows in A. D. 18 in Shantung, where the population's misfortunes were aggravated by a disastrous flood of the Hwang Ho, which abruptly changed its direction to the present one. The rebel armies, acting in isolation, moved on the capital from all sides. The first to take Ch'ang-an in A. D. 23 were the Green Forest men. Wang Mang was beheaded and his body torn to pieces. In A. D. 25, the capital was captured by the Red Eyebrows. Simultaneously, units of the ruling class in Loyang declared Liu Hsiu, a scion of the Han house, emperor. He became known in history as Kuang Wuti (A. D. 25-27). Kuang Wuti began his rule with a "punitive expedition" against the Red Eyebrows. In 29, he succeeded in crushing them, and later suppressed all the other people's movements, Kuang Wuti's reign began the period of the "restored" Han dynasty, called Later or Eastern Han Dynasty, as the capital of the empire was moved to Lo-yang.

*The Fall of the Ancient Empires.* The scope of the uprisings of A. D. 17-25, in which slaves took an active part, showed the slave-owners the need for a greater cohesion of the ruling class. They handed over the function of suppressing the lower classes to the state and thereby sanctioned the restoration of the empire. Under Aiti and Wang Mang, any attempts by the state to restrict private ownership of slaves and interfere with the rights of land- and slave-owners met with desperate resistance, whereas now that the Kuang Wuti's government severely



repressed the rebel movements, private owners no longer protested against Kuang Wuti's laws securing the freedom of those slaves who had actually won it during the uprisings, and freeing those who had sold themselves during famine or had been forcibly enslaved during that period. True, these laws were not always implemented in full, but all state slaves sentenced to bondage for violation of the Wang Mang laws, and some categories of privately owned slaves, were actually freed. The edict of 35 banned the branding of privately owned slaves, the master's right to kill his slaves was limited, and the law on disgraceful market-place executions of slaves was repealed. Government measures to protect some of the slaves' elementary rights were envisaged. The edict even proclaimed (the first official declaration of this kind) that the slave was by his nature also a human being. At the same time the Law for Selling People passed by the Kuang Wuti government introduced greater order into slave-trade and the practice of selling free individuals as slaves, thereby consolidating slave-owning relations. It seems that Kuang Wuti was mainly supported by petty and medium slave-owning estates, while the big land- and slave-owners ("the great families"), far from supporting him, were openly hostile and in 52 raised a rebellion against him, which Kuang Wuti suppressed with characteristic ruthlessness.

Kuang Wuti's government took effective measures to rebuild the dams on the Hwang Ho that had fallen into disrepair. That part of the Great Plain now directly adjoined the metropolitan region (owing to the transfer of the capital of empire from Ch'ang-an, destroyed during the uprisings, to Lo-yang), and Kuang Wuti attached special importance to its economic development. Money circulation was regulated, taxes reduced, and farming and silkworm breeding encouraged. Poor people were given state fields (*kungt'ien*) on favourable terms, including the lands of the disgraced "great families".

Gradually the empire restored its military might and its status of a "world power". The border tribes, which had joined the rebel movement of the empire's lower strata, were pacified. In southern China, the Han empire implemented a harsh policy of forcible assimilation of the local population. Imperial officials cruelly oppressed the aborigines and eradicated local cults and customs. In 42, an uprising against the Han authorities flared up in northern

Vietnam, which Kuang Wuti managed to suppress only in 44, and with great difficulty. In the second half of the 1st century, taking advantage of (and to some extent provoking) the split among the Hsiungnu into southern and northern tribes, and permitting the Southern Hsiungnu, who accepted China's rule, to settle in the empire (on the Ordos plateau), the empire took active measures to restore the Han influence in the Western Regions. General Pan Chao (32-102), brother of the well-known court historian Pan Ku, was appointed Governor of the Western Regions. He succeeded in organising an alliance of the Tingling and Hsian-pi tribes against the Northern Hsiungnu, who laid claims to supremacy in eastern Turkistan. The positions of the Hsiungnu were considerably weakened after Pan Chao routed in A.D. 90, the forces of the Kushan king, a covert ally of the Hsiungnu who also endeavoured to assert his ascendancy over the Silk Route. It is a known fact that after their defeat the Kushans kept sending their "gifts" for a while to the Han court, which was an indirect form of inter-state trade. For a short time, the Han empire restored its hegemony on the Great Silk Route. Pan Chao initiated a vigorous diplomatic activity, apparently desiring to establish direct contacts with Tach'in, or "the great Ch'in country", as the Hans called the Roman empire. But the embassy he sent to Rome only reached Roman Syria, being intentionally delayed en route by Parthian traders. The Chinese-Roman trade through intermediaries had begun in the second half of the 1st century B. C. and was fairly regular. Roman schoolchildren learnt of "Chinese crossbows" from Horace and of goods from The Land of Silk from Virgil, Ptolemy, and Pliny the Elder. The ancient Chinese saw the Romans for the first time in 120, when a group of itinerant jugglers came from Rome to Lo-yang to perform at the court of the Son of Heaven. Simultaneously the Eastern Han empire established links with Hindustan through Upper Burma and Assam, and organised sea communications between the port of Pakhpo in northern Vietnam (which the Romans knew as Cat-tigara) and the eastern coast of India, and also with Japan (via Korea). The first "embassy" from Rome (a name assumed by a private Roman trading mission) came in 166 to Lo-yang along the southern sea route. From the second half of the 2nd century, when the Han empire lost its hegemony on the Silk



Route, Han adopted an expansionist foreign-trade policy in the southern maritime countries – Sri Lanka and Hanchipura (in southern India). These links retained their significance in later periods as well. Expeditions were sent to the southern seas to capture slaves. Slave-trade figured prominently in the foreign dealings of the Later Han empire.

The empire made desperate attempts to seize foreign markets in ever new directions. Its international trading links had never been as extensive as they now were. The consolidation of Han as a world power was accompanied by an efflorescence of science, literature, philosophy, and art. According to eyewitness accounts, the empire's capital Lo-yang was striking in its splendour. The stiff magnificence of the imperial palace and the extravagant luxury of the palaces of the higher aristocracy knew no bounds. Court poets and well-known philosophers sang the praises of the grandeur and stability of the ruling dynasty and glorified the empire as the acme of perfection and the Golden Age come true.

The development of commodity-money relations through a huge expansion of the Han empire's foreign trade led to an increasing involvement of petty and medium slave-owning estates in production for the market.

Economy and trade, crafts and farming all flourished. Watermills and water lifts appeared, and bellows were improved. Cultivation in beds and the system of crop rotation came into use, but were never practised on a wide scale; neither was the heavy mould-boardless plough intended to be drawn by two oxen widely employed. In practice, it was drawn by slaves, and the effect was insignificant. Farmers refused to buy iron agricultural implements made by state slaves, finding them "unsuitable for work".

Although the law imposed certain restrictions on the masters' abuses, where slaves were used in large numbers, they were kept in chains.

The Later Han empire's apparent prosperity was precarious and fraught with profound contradictions. The level of labour productivity did not correspond to the degree of commodity-money relations. Basically, the ancient Chinese empire's economy remained a natural one, and a drag on the production of commodities. At a time of Pan Chao's greatest military and diplomatic successes in the Western Regions, opponents of an active foreign

policy gained the upper hand at court. They expressed the interests of those sections of the ruling class which were not interested in expanding foreign trade or in further extending commodity-money relations, since their immense estates with their workshops and inner markets increasingly became self-sufficient entities. "He is so rich that he can close the gates and open a market," was the proverbial description of an owner of such an estate.

Two trends of socioeconomic development became apparent in the Later Han empire. Slave-owning remained the leading factor. Slave-owning estates, including large-scale ones, continued to exist, but slave labour was mostly used in certain specific types of production (irrigation, camphor and varnish-tree plantations, cattle-breeding, fishing, salt mines), not in farming. There were increasing complaints about the low productivity of slave labour, which were first voiced in the 1st century B. C. (during the 81 B. C. governmental disputes about salt and iron monopolies and later in the report of the official Kung Yu). In the 2nd century A. D., land concentration assumed enormous, previously inconceivable proportions. "The great families", unconnected with the higher officialdom, sometimes had estates stretching "from one province to another". Their influence extended throughout the neighbourhood, including small towns. They had thousands of slaves, herds of horses and cattle, flocks of sheep and other domestic animals, and great workshops and mines where fettered slaves worked. They also grew richer through trade and usury. On such enormous estates, it was difficult and sometimes impossible to organise the necessary supervision over slaves, and the labour of personally dependent workers was becoming increasingly widespread here, in such forms as *puch'ü* (personal bodyguard given allotments of land), and various types of *kê* or "guests" ("field worker guests", "guests for food and clothes", etc.) – a kind of clients or colons descriptively called in the sources "those who have no land of their own but till the fields of rich men". Impoverished farmers had to rent land from the "strong houses" on the metayage system – and on very hard terms. The magnates' vast estates sometimes had thousands of these "guest households", and here rudiments of a new type of exploitation of the immediate producer, which left him a measure of economic independence, came into being.

In the state sector, “the fields of the *tun* (military settlements) (*tuntien*), became rather numerous in that period; here the farming was done by the colonists and their families receiving from their superiors farming implements, cattle and seeds, and delivering the yield to the state granaries, from which they later received payment in kind. Despite the hard conditions of labour, “military settlers” were not legally slaves, as cases of their later enslavement by the authorities show. The *tun tien* agrarian system, apparently connected with the revival of communities, later became the prototype of the state “allotment system” (*tseyuntien*) which was introduced in China in the middle of the 3rd century A.D.

The conflict between the two economic tendencies—further growth of slave-owning and the nascent pre-feudal forms—manifested itself in the debate on commodity-money relations in the 2nd century A.D. Some of the reports presented to the emperor advised prohibition of money and immobilisation of metal coins.

In the field of foreign policy, the controversy centred on whether to continue military aggression and expansion of foreign trade or to curtail them. The issue was finally settled after Pan Chao’s death, when the governorship of the Western Regions was abolished.

At the beginning of the Later Han period, the census recorded only 21 million taxpayers in the empire, but towards the end of the 1st century that figure rose to 53 million, which indicated the restoration of the state mechanism and the growing number of the empire’s taxpayers. However, only fifteen years later the census showed a fall in the population of nearly 10 per cent, and that at a time when there were no domestic disturbances or bloody wars. Apparently part of the state’s taxpayers (and only taxpayers were recorded by the regular official censuses of the Han empire beginning with the A.D. 2) had accepted the patronage of major landowners. Their position fundamentally differed from the situation in which ruined peasants mortgaged their fields and sold members of their families as slaves but remained independent citizens themselves. Now, in the 2nd century, poor families “voluntarily” gave up their land to “strong houses” on condition that they could cultivate it as individuals personally dependent on the magnates, or sometimes “voluntarily sold themselves as guests”. Towards the end of the

2nd century, some of the major members of the “strong houses” patronised several thousands of such families each—*kê*, *pinko*, *puch’ü*, and others. The work-force of such an estate would be extremely mixed, including slaves, half-slaves, various types of dependents, lease-holders, and enslaved debtors. Alarmed at the falling revenue, the state was legally powerless to do anything, since the commoners—the state’s principal taxpayers—had the right to do what they pleased with their land; they could sell it or hand it over on certain terms to other physical or juridical persons, including the “strong houses”, while the latter in their turn could expand their estates to any size whatever. Not being the owner of all land, the state was powerless to stop its subjects concluding land and personal deals.

Many statesmen saw the “power of money inflaming the lust for gain” as the cause of the ruin of many petty landowners. In the mid-2nd century, resisting the growth of commodity relations, the government officially announced the policy of “respect for farming and suppression of trade”. That policy was in keeping with the general trend of social development towards a natural economy.

The area of arable land registered by the state kept falling disastrously, and so did the numbers of taxpayers (from 49.5 million in the mid-2nd century to 7.5 million in the mid-3rd century). That naturally led to an increase in the tax pressure on the remaining masses of the empire’s civil population; according to some sources, the taxes were ten times as great as the “legal” norm. The people grew indignant; whole villages abandoned their homelands in an attempt to escape taxes and requisitions, becoming homeless vagrants. The country was devastated by a terrible famine and pestilence, whole districts depopulated by epidemics. The fields were overgrown with weeds. The prices of foodstuffs skyrocketed. “People became cannibals, and the bones of dead men were scattered throughout the land,” reports the *History of the Later Han Dynasty*. Commodity-money relations rapidly declined. The estates of the “strong houses” increasingly became economically closed self-sufficient entities, while the peasants that still remained free had no means for participating in the commodity circulation. City life came to a halt. Compared with the beginning of the 1st century, the number of cities in the country dropped by more than a half. At the beginning of the dynasty,

self-governing cities had been a characteristic feature of the imperial structure, and it had been their support that had brought Liu Pang his initial successes in the struggle for power, whereas now the sources did not mention them at all. Officials proposed to reckon all taxes in fabrics; finally, in 204, a decree was promulgated replacing all money payments by payments in kind, and in 221, an imperial edict in the Wei state (which had sprung on the ruins of the Han empire in the Hwang Ho region), abolished coins and introduced silk and grain into circulation instead.

Beginning with the second quarter of the 2nd century, the chronicles recorded local uprisings nearly every year – more than a hundred during half a century. Regular repairs and maintenance of dams and other irrigation structures stopped, and Hwang Ho's floods brought countless misfortunes to hundreds of thousands of families. The flood in 153 was especially disastrous. Central authority became weaker with every passing year. The empire's corrupted bureaucratic mechanism grew to colossal proportions and became a self-contained force eating up the surplus product generated by the working masses. Child emperors were pawns in the hands of court groupings of "eunuchs" and "scholars". Their strife, which sometimes erupted in bloody massacres in the capital, reflected the heat of the political struggle between the centrifugal and centripetal forces within the ruling class. The former were represented by the "strong houses", which aspired to make their estates not only economically but also politically independent, with seigniorial rights for themselves and personal dependence of the peasants on the seigneur. Their increased influence in the country's socio-political life in the mid-2nd century signified the empire's disintegration and a decline of the emperor's power. The "scholars'" critique of the dominance of "dirty" grabbers in the central administration from the positions of "pure judgement" and their coup attempts in 166 and 169, intended to replace the corrupt administration with fresh blood, failed. The "eunuchs'" reprisals were ruthless. "Scholars" were executed, tortured, exiled; a thousand of the "pure ones" were imprisoned. Their books were publicly burnt.

In 184, a revolt on a gigantic scale, called the Yellow Headdress Uprising, broke out. It was headed by Chang Chiao, magician, physician, and founder

of a secret pro-Taoist sect who called himself Teacher of Highest Virtue. He prophesied that the existing unjust system, an embodiment of sinfulness and evil ("The Blue Heaven") would be replaced by an era of righteousness and universal prosperity ("The Yellow Heaven"). Chang Chiao's appeals and sermons, addressed to all people regardless of sex, age, title or rank who desired salvation, and promising release from suffering and happiness on earth in the nearest future, attracted to him multitudes of the underprivileged. Within a short period, Chang Chiao raised a 300,000-strong underground army of 36 units – one for each district of the empire. That was only made possible by the utter corruption of the state mechanism. The sect's agents recruited some adherents even in the highest court circles. Rumours of an imminent uprising grew. On the eve of the revolt, Chang Chiao's chief agent in the capital was denounced, seized and executed, and immediately after that his supporters in Lo-yang were delivered up to the authorities. Chang Chiao gave a signal for an immediate uprising throughout the country. The insurgents besieged cities, ransacked large estates, flooded fields, burnt down government buildings, killed rich men and officials, opened prisons, and freed slaves. On Chang Chiao's orders, centres of free distribution of foodstuffs to the people were organised everywhere. Slaves were active in the uprising, but its main force apparently was the ruined petty owners and the serfs. The rebels in most cases did not go beyond seizing and distributing property and foodstuffs – there were no demands for a redistribution of land, so characteristic of the subsequent peasant revolts. Chang Chiao died at the very peak of the uprising, but the Yellow Headdress rebels continued to fight just as stubbornly and selflessly. The imperial authorities proved unable to cope with the rebel movement. The armies of the "strong houses" rose to fight the Yellow Headdresses and defeated their main forces. A tower of hundreds of thousands of cut-off heads was erected at the main gate of the capital to celebrate the victory. However, the country was swept by wave after wave of fresh uprisings, with frontier tribes joining the rebels. The revolts were only crushed at the beginning of the third century. The warlords who had suppressed the movement divided the loot and the power among themselves, forgetting all about the emperor. The Han empire was in fact nonexistent already,

although the last weak scion of the Liu dynasty dragged out a pitiable existence at the court of one of the conquerors of the Yellow Headdresses.

The popular uprisings, strife among the "strong houses", and barbarian incursions brought the ancient Chinese civilisation to an agonising end. The Han empire disintegrated as a result of the crisis of the empire's slave-owning economy and the incipient processes of feudalisation. The Hsien-pei tribes, which conquered China in the 4th century A.D., occupied in fact, an already medieval China.

*China's Culture in the Epoch of the Ancient Empire (End of the 3rd Century B. C.-Beginning of the 3rd Century A. D.).* At the start of the 1st century A.D., the earth's population amounted to 250 million, and one-fifth of that number lived in the Han empire. The Ch'in-Han empire was the largest state of the ancient world in the later antiquity. Its more than four-hundred-year existence was an important stage in the historical development of all Eastern Asia and part of the world-historical process covering the epoch of the emergence, rise and downfall of ancient world empires, and with them, of the slave-owning mode of production. For China's national history, that was an exceptionally important stage of consolidation of the ancient Chinese people.

The Han period brought the greatest cultural achievements of ancient China in science and material production as well as in art and society's spiritual life. Various branches of the exact sciences (astronomy, mathematics, medicine, physics, mechanics, acoustics) developed intensely. Regular records were kept of astronomic observations, in particular of the appearance of comets (the first such observation was recorded in 613 B. C., and since the 3rd century B. C. they have been kept without interruption); star catalogues were compiled, a lunar-and-solar calendar improved, and the sundial was invented to replace the water clock. Ancient Chinese astronomers could predict lunar eclipses and the possibility of solar ones. In 28 B. C., Han astronomers discovered the existence of sun spots. An achievement of world significance was the invention of a compass—a square iron plate with a magnetic spoon freely rotating on its surface, of which the handle pointed south. The mechanical law of action and counteraction was worked out in detail.

A Han treatise of the 2nd century postulated in poetic form (just as in Lucretius) the need to adjust scales for compression and expansion from cold and heat. Han scholars studied, with some success, resonance phenomena and the laws of harmony. Chang Heng (78-139) was the first scientist in the world to invent a prototype of the seismograph; he built a celestial globe, described 2,500 stars grouped in 320 constellations, and worked out a theory of the earth's spheric form and of the spatio-temporal infinity of the universe. Han mathematicians wrote an encyclopedia known as *The Art of Counting in Nine Books*; they knew decimal fractions, invented negative numbers, did a great deal towards specifying the value of  $\pi$  and assimilated some methods of mathematics similar to those of the Greeks.

The end of the ancient epoch was marked by innovations in the development of technical implements in the crafts and agriculture (cf. the first mechanical engines using the force of falling water, pumping gear, improved plough, cultivation in beds, and crop rotation). Fan Shênchih summed up the achievements of agriculture in a treatise on agronomy and pedology; works on pharmacology and medicine appeared. A 1st-century medical catalogue lists 35 treatises on different diseases. The techniques of town-building made considerable advances. The plan of town-building worked out in the late Han epoch became a kind of standard for the architects of later times.

High standards were achieved in the production of lacquered objects, which began in the epoch of the Warring States. The development of this industry was stimulated by advances in woodworking and mining (in particular, the mining of cinnabar and other mineral pigments which were an important item in international trade—great quantities of it were exported to India). Lacquering centres arose in many areas of the empire, but the district of Shu in Szechuan, one of the most highly developed in the empire, was especially famous for its lacquer. Lacquered objects with the Shu mark were in great demand far beyond the borders of China. Excellent specimens have been found by archaeologists in Korea. Szechuan was also second only to Shantung as a major centre of the silk industry. Han silks were of very high quality. In the Han epoch, an improved loom was invented, which greatly enlarged the assortment of fabrics. Silks were the most important

export item in Chinese trade. They flowed in a broad stream to all the major countries of the ancient world, reaching Rome and Egypt overland and along sea routes. India was a major intermediary in silk trade. Sericulture developed in India, too, apparently under the influence of China, while Han craftsmen borrowed from India the technique of cotton fabrics production. Links between China and India were established long before the Han epoch, but at that time they were especially intense and fruitful for both civilisations.

At the beginning of the new era, China gave the world one of mankind's greatest inventions—paper. Indian ink was also invented at that time. The change over from writing on bamboo plates to writing on silk, and from stylus to scribe's brush had made it possible to simplify the writing system. Now further advances were made in that direction. The hieroglyphic script was systematised, and a new style of writing called *k'aishu* was invented, forming the basis of modern Chinese writing. Han materials and instruments of writing were borrowed, along with the hieroglyphics, by the ancient peoples of Vietnam, Korea, and Japan, while these countries, in their turn, influenced the cultural development of ancient China (in rice-growing and other areas of agriculture, in seafaring and the artistic handicrafts).

The imperial epoch was one of generalisation of knowledge and the summing up of the whole of China's ancient culture. The palaces of the patrons of arts including emperors, became cultural centres with large libraries, where scientific, philosophical and literary topics were widely discussed and ancient monuments collected, edited and commented on. China's most ancient folklore collections, the *Book of Odes* (*Shihching*), the *Book of History* (*Shangshu*), and the *Book of Changes* (*Iching*) were written down at that time. In fact, the whole of the surviving ancient Chinese heritage was recorded in the Han period. Philology and poetics were also studied, and the first dictionaries compiled. Major works of prose, mostly historical, were written at the time. The "father of Chinese history", the great Ssuma Ch'ien (145-86 B. C.), wrote the remarkable *Historical Memoirs* (*Shihchi*)—130 volumes on the history of China from the mythical first ancestor Huangti to the reign of Wuti, with detailed reviews of data on the neighbouring tribes and the countries

of Western and Central Asia and the Far East. This book is in most cases the only and therefore invaluable source on the ancient history of these peoples; besides, Ssuma Ch'ien's descriptions are marked by precision of historical and geographical information quite unusual for those times, and are in this respect on a par with Ptolemy's writings. A great stylist, Ssuma Ch'ien vividly and graphically described political and economic situations and the life of the people. He made an outstanding contribution to Chinese historiography and was the first Chinese author to have created literary portraits, which places him among the most distinguished Han writers. The popular tradition has preserved the story of the tragic fate of "the father of Chinese history", who was emasculated on Wuti's orders for criticising the emperor and defending his disgraced friend, the military leader; he did not lose heart but, decided to "reject the idea of suicide" and to "pay back for the shame inflicted" on him by creating a truthful account of the "essence of the changes in these days and in remote antiquity". *Historical Memoirs* became a supreme standard for the historiographers of the whole Far East for ages to come. The traditions of ancient Chinese historiography were continued by Pan Ku (A.D. 39-92) and his sister Pan Piao, the only woman historian in the whole ancient world. They wrote an official history of the ruling dynasty, *The History of the Earlier Han Dynasty* (*Ch'ien Han shu*), describing the historical events from the positions of the Confucian worldview.

Prominent in the brilliant constellation of the Han poets was Ssuma Hsiangju (179-118 B. C.), who sang, in an elevated solemn style, the splendour and might of the Wuti empire. He continued the Ch'u traditions of Ch'ü Yüan's odes, a characteristic feature of all Han literature which absorbed the poetic heritage of the peoples of south China. A courtier and *bon vivant*, Ssuma Hsiangju became the talk of the people with a sensational love intrigue. He abducted the beautiful daughter of the richest mine-owner in Szechuan and kept a tavern together with his bride, which scandalised the father-in-law so much that he, "ashamed to appear in the street", made them the gift of "a hundred slaves and a million coins". The poet was "lured by fresh loves" until old age. The tradition has it that his poems had the magic power to revive a love grown cold.

For the greater glory of the dynasty, Wuti

founded the Music Bureau (*Yüehfu*), where folk songs were collected and arranged and musical works were written. Some of the *Yüehfu* songs were founded on melodies and themes that came from Central Asia. The works of the best poets influenced by the Music Bureau were realistic in content, reflecting the mores of the epoch and the mood of the simple people. Very few folk songs from the treasury of the Music Bureau have survived; even fewer are songs expressing the rebellious spirit of the people rising against injustice. These last include "Eastern Gates", "East of Pingling Hill", especially remarkable are the *yao* songs, in which the social protest is strongest. They even call for the overthrow of the emperor; thus one of them ends with the words, "Death to Ch'in Shih-huang!" The leader of Yellow Headdresses is said to have written a song calling for an uprising: "An end to the Blue Heaven (i. e., the Han dynasty) has come // We shall live under a Yellow Heaven. // In the year under the sign jiazi // Happiness will come to Under Heaven."

Towards the end of the Han empire, anacreontic and fairytale themes increasingly became the main content of secular poetry; verses lost the quality of emotional spontaneity, gravitating towards elegance and grandiloquence. Books about miracles, legends, mystic and fantastic literature became popular. The authorities encouraged magnificent rites and secular spectacles; organisation of pageants was one of the state's administrative functions. Rudiments of scenic art did not, however, develop into drama as a literary genre in ancient China.

Ceramic models of buildings and burial reliefs show that the main features of Chinese traditional architecture evolved at that time. The recent excavations near Sian at the site of Ch'in Shih-huang's tomb brought the sensational discovery of a "clay army" of three thousand foot soldiers and cavalrymen, life-size—an indication that portrait sculpture emerged in that period. The characteristic traits of Han art were high professional skill and realistic quality. These traits are found in 1st-century reliefs from Szechuan, free in their composition and containing elements of perspective; their subjects are market-place scenes, hunting expeditions, scenes of harvesting and of hard labour in the salt mines. Second-century reliefs from the crypt of the Wu aristocratic family in Shantung, and frescoes of the same period in the burials in Liaotung are very clear and

precise in composition, but religious, mythological and didactic themes prevail here.

In that epoch religious and philosophical literature evolved and became widespread, stimulated at first by the elaboration of an official state ideology and later by the growing socio-political and spiritual crisis of the Later Han empire. The ideas that Heaven consciously interfered in human lives and meted out requital for both good and bad deeds became stronger in Confucianism. Tung Chungshu, the founder of Confucian theology, developed in the 1st century B. C. the ideas of divine origin of imperial power, declaring Heaven to be a supreme and nearly anthropomorphic deity. He was the first theologian to deify Confucius. The Confucius cult merged with the ancestor cult, which figured very prominently in Confucian theology. Tung Chungshu insisted on the banning of all schools but the Confucian. Under Wuti, Confucianism reformed by Tung Chungshu was declared the official doctrine of the empire. However, in the sphere of practical management preference was given to the adherents of the Legalist school, who were the inspirers of Wuti's financial, economic and foreign policy. The social processes in the system of the empire worked further changes in Confucianism, which, early in the new era, split into two principal hostile trends—the mystic school continuing the Tung Chungshu line (the New Texts school), and the Old Texts school, led by Wang Mang, more rationalist in character and more flexible in its reactions to the problems of the modern times. The state actively used Confucianism in its interests, interfering in the struggle between the doctrines which became increasingly fierce. The emperor initiated Confucian disputes, endeavouring to stop the schism for purely political reasons and acting in fact as head of church. At the end of the 1st century A. D., a council formally put an end to dissent in Confucianism, declaring all apocryphal literature to be false and accepting the doctrine of the New Texts school as official religious orthodoxy. Henceforth, executions of dissidents became a dogma sanctified by Confucius's authority. The triumph of the New Texts school signified theocratic sanctioning of imperial authority. In that school, the idea of heavenly Providence was used to substantiate the predestination of the second devolution of the Heavenly Mandate on the Later Han dynasty (resolutely rejected by all the other schools). That ini-



tiated the "dynastic idea"—a new principle of religious-political ideology.

Late Han Confucianism gave the doctrine of the goal-directed Will of Heaven a specific ethical interpretation, treating it as an eternal principle of the immutability of social relations between ruler and subject, father and son, husband and wife, master and servant, on the observance of which the harmony of the cosmic elements *yin* and *yang* entirely depended. That religious-ethical system had a pronounced class bias, declaring the vulgar mob and barbarians to be essentially amoral, asserting that the powers that be were above law, promising them life after death and posthumous glory in accordance with their titles and ranks during their lifetime, and proclaiming the killing of any "bandits" "daring to lift a hand against the king" to be every subject's sacred duty. In the late 2nd century A.D. the "state copy" of the Confucian holy writ, the *Five Books*, was carved in stone, in the New Texts version. From that time, violation of the Confucian commandments incorporated in the penal code was punished by death as "the gravest crime". The dogmatism and intolerance of Late Han Confucianism were linked with the growing role of religion as an instrument of ideological influence on the masses; these were traits characteristic of medieval rather than ancient religions. In Late Han society, torn by acute internal contradictions, Confucian orthodoxy was intended to consolidate the ruling circles of the dominant class and to separate that elite from the bulk of producers by a rigid framework of social partitions, demanding implicit obedience from the common people on pain of Heavenly retribution and promising them nothing in return.

When persecutions of "false" doctrines began, secret religious-mystical sects spread throughout the country. The opponents of the ruling regime were united on the platform of religious Taoism, which was in opposition to Confucianism and at the same time dissociated itself from philosophical Taoism that continued to develop the ancient materialist concepts. The Taoist religion finally took shape by the early 2nd century. Patriarch Chang Taoling of Szechuan, called "The Teacher", is believed to have been the founder of that religion. The rumour spread that through the mediation of the spirits, Laotzu set him the task of making men happy. His prophecies and the doctrine of achieving immor-

talinity attracted to him multitudes of the underprivileged who lived under his rule in a closed colony—the basis of secret Taoist organisations. According to the legend, Chang Taoling ascended to Heaven during his lifetime, leaving no body on the earth that could be buried. That legend, characteristic of the Taoist religion, signified a rejection of the Confucian ancestor cult. As any dogmatic religion, Taoism split into sects immediately on its emergence. The Taoist heresy's assertion of the equality of men before gods and its condemnation of riches attracted the masses. The teaching of the secret T'ai-p'ingtao (The Doctrine of Justice) sect, close to the Taoist heresy, with its elements of eschatological and Messianic aspirations, democratic rules and militant mood, became the banner of the movement of the Yellow Headdresses, which dealt a mortal blow to the Han empire.

The tendency towards the transformation of the ancient socio-philosophical teachings into religious doctrines, which manifested itself in the transfigurations of Confucianism and Taoism, was a sign of profound socio-psychological changes maturing in the Later Han empire. However, it was not the ethical religions arising on Chinese soil but foreign Buddhism transplanted to the agonising Later Han world that became a world religion and acted as the main ideological factor in the feudalisation of China and the whole of East Asia. Buddhism came to China at the beginning of the new era, finding almost immediately a response among the working masses and certain sections of the ruling class. At the end of the 2nd century, the Mahayana Buddhist teaching already enjoyed fairly wide recognition. The spreading of Buddhism facilitated the intensification of the international cultural links between China, India and Central Asia, which developed both along the caravan route in the north and the sea routes in the south (via Burma and Yünnan).

The impetus of the development of the scientific and philosophical worldview had not yet exhausted itself, either. The work of the most outstanding Han thinker Wang Ch'ung (A.D. 27-97) falls within the short period of the Later Han empire upsurge. Wang Ch'ung was a major materialist of antiquity. His polemic treatise *Critical Essays or Discourse Weighed in the Balance* (Lunhen) was an expression of his profound civic courage. During his lifetime, Confucian orthodoxy was canonised at the Discussion in

the White Tiger Hall, and an end was thus put to free thought. In an atmosphere of intense ideological pressure, Wang Ch'ung had the courage to challenge Confucian dogmas and religious mysticism. Rejecting the deification of Heaven, Wang Ch'ung held the materialist and atheist view that "heaven is a body similar to the earth". Wang Ch'ung asserted the unity, eternity and corporeality of the world. His proposition that the source of being was the fine material substance *ch'i* continued the traditions of ancient Chinese natural philosophy with its atomistic theory of the structure of matter. All things in nature emerged naturally, as a result of condensation of that substance, independently of any supernatural force. Wang Ch'ung rejected innate knowledge and mystic intuition with which Confucianists endowed ancient wise men, and regarded sensuous perception of the real world as the only path of cognition. "If a person does not see or hear the surrounding world, he can have no conception of it." Believing that there was no fundamental difference between man and animal, the philosopher asserted at the same time: "Of the creatures born by heaven and earth, man is the most valuable, and that value is determined by his ability for knowledge." In the chapter called "Discourse on Death" Wang Ch'ung severely criticised the Confucian ancestor cult and religious Taoism's ideas of physical immortality. Wang Ch'ung implicitly rejected the idea of the immortality of the soul, insisting that, like all living beings, man was completely destroyed after death. "The dead are not transformed into spirits, they have no ability for knowledge, and neither can

they do harm to men," he affirmed. Wang Ch'ung was one of the most erudite men of antiquity, a man of encyclopaedic knowledge. Although his polemics was mainly levelled against Confucian theology, he also pursued the goals of enlightenment, passionately denouncing the prejudices and superstitions of the common people. Coming from a family that was neither rich nor aristocratic, Wang Ch'ung knew well the thoughts and feelings of the simple people. He wrote his works with an eye to this kind of audience as well, and he therefore attached special importance to simplicity and clarity of exposition. "I want to be understood by the simple people," declared Wang Ch'ung.

Wang Ch'ung's materialist worldview, particularly his doctrine of naturalness (*tzujan*), that is, the naturally necessary process of the development of the objective world, played an outstanding role in the history of Chinese philosophy. During his lifetime, however, Wang Ch'ung's work was not recognised and was even persecuted for his critique of Confucius. A thousand years after Wang Ch'ung's death his manuscript was accidentally discovered, and the world learnt of one of the most outstanding atheists, materialists and enlighteners of antiquity.

The Ch'in-Han epoch had the same basic significance for the further historico-cultural development of China and, more generally, of all eastern Asia, as the Graeco-Roman world for European history. The Han empire can in this sense be referred to as Chinese antiquity, which laid the foundations of a cultural tradition that can be traced throughout the long history of China.

# Part III

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## The Graeco-Roman World

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### Chapter 11

#### Early Greece

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The achievements of the ancient Greek civilisation are very well known: they formed the basis of European culture. Elements of ancient Greek architecture are still used in construction. A considerable proportion of modern scientific terminology, names of sciences, including the term "history", most personal names, and many words and expressions current in modern European languages come from Old Greek. The works of Greek tragedians, poets, sculptors, and architects, the ancient Greek epics and the writings of thinkers embodying the ideals and aspirations of that epoch still give esthetic pleasure and serve as models for modern creative workers. In philosophy, just as in many other areas of culture and science, we continually turn to "the achievements of that small people whose universal talents and activity assured it a place in the history of human development that no other people can ever claim".<sup>1</sup>

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The late 3rd and early 2nd millennia B. C. was a most important stage in Europe's history. It was at that time that a society divided into the classes of oppressors and the oppressed first emerged on European territory, in the southern part of the Balkan peninsula and the outlying islands. The formation of class society resulted from a spontaneous process of previous development of the local peoples, above all from the development of their productive forces. C. 2500 B. C., major centres of metallurgy arose on

many of the islands of the Aegean and on the mainland. Considerable advances were achieved in pottery-making with the introduction of the potter's wheel. Progress in navigation also played a major role. Greek islanders could already build large and fast vessels (with 10 to 12 pairs of oars). Advances in seafaring facilitated contacts between various regions and a rapid spreading of technical and cultural innovations. Just as important was progress in agriculture, where a new polycultural type of farming arose, based on simultaneous growing of cereals (barley above all), grapes and olives (the so-called Mediterranean triad).

As labour productivity grew, exploitation of manpower became economically justified. On the other hand, an increase in the mass of surplus product enabled society to maintain a certain number of people not directly engaged in productive labour. That created the economic basis for the existence of the exploiting stratum of society. The closeness to the ancient civilisations of the Near East also had a considerable effect on the development of society in that region.

The initial stages in the formation of a class society and the state have not been sufficiently studied, the main reason being a relative scarcity of sources. Archaeological materials cannot throw light on the peripeteias of political history and the character of social relations, while the earliest system of syllabic writing which emerged on Crete (the so-called Linear Script A) has not yet been deciphered as we still do not know what language the creators of that system of writing spoke. Later, the Greeks which inhabited the Balkan peninsula adapted that script to

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 46.

their language (the so-called Linear Script B); it was only deciphered in 1953 by the British scholars M. Ventris and J. Chadwick. But all the texts are business records, and the information they provide is therefore fairly limited. Finally, a picture of the society of the 2nd millennium B.C. can also be gleaned from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, and certain myths. But it is very difficult to give a historical interpretation of this type of sources artistically transforming historical reality, with ideas and realities of different periods merged into single entities, making it very hard to identify elements that can be reliably referred to the 2nd millennium. For these reasons, the history of the societies of the southern part of the Balkan peninsula and Crete in the Bronze Age (2nd millennium B.C.) has not yet been sufficiently studied, and much remains in the sphere of scientific hypothesis.

Some scholars believe that the first states emerged on the Balkan peninsula as early as the mid-3rd millennium B.C. In any case, the nature of a number of sites studied by archaeologists in this region (Lerna in Argos, Rafina in Attica, a number of sites on the islands of Lemnos and Syros, and in Crete) permits the assumption that these societies were probably on the threshold of the transition from the pre-class to class structure or may have even undergone that transition.

But the moulding of class society and the state in the south of the Balkans was interrupted by an invasion of tribes from the north. Greek tribes in the true sense of the term (they called themselves Achaeans or Danaoi) appeared here c. 22nd century B.C. The pre-Greek population, whose ethnic relationships have not yet been established, was partly ousted by the newcomers and partly assimilated. That tribal migration interrupted for a while social progress in the south of the Balkan peninsula, since the conquering tribes were at a lower stage of development. This resulted in a certain difference in the destinies of the two parts of the region, the continental part and Crete. Crete was not affected by the tribal migration and, accordingly, continued to develop unimpeded. More than that, for several centuries it was a zone of very fast socioeconomic, political and cultural advance. On the other hand, temporary regress of mainland society had another important consequence. In the 3rd millennium B.C., states had developed in very restricted enclaves surrounded on

all sides by tribes living in primitive communities. The Achaean conquest levelled the differences in the development of various regions, so that when in the 2nd millennium B.C. the formation of class society and the state began again, the process involved practically the whole of Greek territory.

*Crete.* The civilisation of the Bronze Age which emerged and flourished on Crete is usually called Minoan. That name was given it by the British archaeologist Sir Arthur Evans, the first to discover monuments of that civilisation during excavations at Knossos. The Greek mythological tradition regarded Knossos as the residence of King Minos, the powerful ruler of Crete and many other Aegean islands. It was here that Queen Pasiphaë gave birth to Minotaur (half-man, half-bull), Daedalus built the labyrinth for Minotaur, etc.

The economic progress of Cretan society, quite pronounced in the second half of the 3rd and early 2nd millennia B.C., was expressed in particular in the growing number of new settlements. All the lands suitable for farming, which was the leading branch in Cretan economy, must have been cultivated by that time. Livestock-breeding also apparently played an important role in the economy. There was a considerable progress in the handicrafts, too. Accelerated social development and increased labour productivity generated a mass of surplus product part of which could be used for exchange between communities. That was of special significance for Crete, which lay on the intersection of ancient sea routes connecting the Balkan peninsula and the islands of the Aegean with Asia Minor, Syria and North Africa. Like all the other seafaring peoples of the antiquity, Cretans combined sea trade with fishing and piracy.

At the turn of the 2nd millennium B.C., Cretan society made a qualitative leap in its development, as the first states emerged practically simultaneously throughout the territory of Crete. Originally, there were four independent states, each of them including several dozen small community settlements; their centres were palaces – at Knossos, Phaistos, Mallia, and Kato Zakro. It is precisely the emergence of palaces that was the most striking indication of the class and state nature of society. The immense gap between a vast splendid palace

and a wretched hovel is a striking indication of social inequality.

The epoch of "palace civilisation" on Crete covered about 600 years, from 2000 to 1400 B. C. 1700 B. C. all the palaces were destroyed. The causes of that destruction are variously explained in modern science. Some scholars believe that the destruction was caused by natural disasters (a great earthquake, most likely), others see here the result of a social conflict, of the struggle of the popular masses enslaved by the upper stratum of society. Whatever the cause of that disaster, it delayed the development of Cretan society for a short while only. Soon new palaces were built on the sites of the old ones, surpassing them in splendour and monumentality.

The "new palace" epoch is much better known to the scholars. The four palaces mentioned above, plus a number of settlements and necropolises, have been fairly well studied. The Knossos palace, a stupendous structure covering an area of nearly a hectare, excavated by A. Evans, has been studied better than any other. Although only one storey has survived, the building apparently had two and probably three storeys. The people living at the palace enjoyed all the comforts and conveniences possible at that time—an excellent system of water supply and drainage, terracotta baths in special bathrooms, and excellent ventilation and lighting. Everyday utensils were as a rule highly artistic and often made of precious metals. Fine murals were discovered in many rooms of the palace, reproducing Cretan landscapes or scenes from the lives of the palace inhabitants, so far incomprehensible.

Most of the ground floor was taken up by enormous storage facilities where wine, olive oil, grain, local craftsmen's products and wares from remote lands were kept. Finally, the palace also had workshops where jewelers, potters, and decorators of vases toiled for the palace inhabitants.

Scholars hold different opinions of the social and political organisation of Cretan society. On the basis of available data it may be assumed, though, that palace economy was the nucleus of the state's economic life. This economy developed already in a class society as a result of the evolution of the communal structure. Originally, the palace was the sacral and economic centre of the community (or more probably of a number of communities). It was a storeroom for reserves of foodstuffs, tools and imple-

ments intended for use by the community during natural disasters, enemy invasions and other critical situations. The communities voluntarily handed over part of their surplus product to the palace stores. Later, craftsmen's workshops serving the whole of the community were apparently set up here. But just as in many other early societies, the community administration became separated from the main body of the commoners, as class structure developed. Previously a servant of the community, this administration, relying on the great material wealth at its disposal, now set itself up above society. The communities' voluntary contributions became compulsory requisitions, and relations of domination and subordination evolved. The community reserve fund grew into a palace estate economically dominating society. One of the factors in this process was concentration of a great share of handicraft production here. External economic links were also controlled by the palace. Its power was also increased by its function of the community's religious centre. A single individual thus combined the roles of king and supreme priest. At the time of its efflorescence, Cretan society may be assumed to have been a theocracy. The 2nd millennium B. C. saw the beginning of slavery in Crete, but the number of slaves was not great.

Minoan civilisation reached its peak in the 16th and first half of the 15th centuries B. C. At the beginning of that period, all Crete was united under the sway of the Knossos palace's rulers, as indicated by a network of convenient roads connecting Knossos with the most remote corners of the island and complete absence of fortifications. Greek legends describe King Minos as the first "ruler of the seas", who built a large fleet, did away with piracy and established dominion over the Aegean. Naval expansion went hand in hand with the development of trade. An indication of the scope of trade are finds of Cretan craftsmen's artifacts over a vast area—from Spain to Mesopotamia and from the north of the Balkan peninsula to the Nile valley. Cretan colonies and trade stations appeared on the Cyclades, Rhodes, and the coast of Asia Minor. Cretans also established active trading and diplomatic links with Egypt and the states of the Syro-Phoenician coast.

In the mid-15th century B. C., Crete was devastated by a natural disaster which wiped out the Minoan civilisation. The disaster was most likely a great eruption of the volcano on the island of Thera.

Most settlements and palaces were destroyed. Taking advantage of this opportunity, the Achaeans from the Balkan peninsula invaded the island, and the former advanced centre of the Mediterranean became a god-forsaken province of Achaean Greece.

*Achaean Greece.* At the turn of the 2nd millennium B. C., the southern part of the Balkan peninsula was occupied by Greek, or Achaean, tribes. The power of tribal chieftains must have been replaced by royal authority already in the 18th and 17th centuries. The heyday of the Achaean civilisation came in the 15th-13th centuries B. C. Originally, it was centred round Argolis, later expanding to the whole of Peloponnese, central Greece (Attica, Boeotia, Phocis), a considerable part of northern Greece (Thessaly) and many islands of the Aegean.

The earliest monuments of this civilisation were the so-called shaft graves discovered in the 19th century by Heinrich Schliemann during excavations at Mycenae. Here the first kings of the city and their relatives were buried. The tombs contained great riches and numerous weapons.

Just as on Crete, palaces played a great role in the life of Achaean society. The most significant of these have been discovered at Mycenae, Tiryns, Pylos, Athens, Thebes, Orchomenus, and Iolcos. The most important trait that distinguished them from Cretan palaces was the existence of fortifications – they were all mighty citadels. The Tiryns citadel offers probably the most striking illustration, with its walls built of huge limestone blocks weighing up to 12 tons. The walls were more than 4.5 metres thick and 7.5 metres high in the surviving part.

Like Cretan palaces, Achaean ones were built on an identical ground plan. The distinctive feature of Achaean palaces was their symmetric design. The central part of the palace was a rectangular megaron, with a hearth in the middle and four columns round it. Archaeologists have studied the Pylos palace more thoroughly than the others. It had two storeys and consisted of several dozen rooms – ceremonial and sacral ones, the private chambers of the king, the queen and members of their household; vast storerooms for keeping grain, wine, olive oil, and various utensils; and numerous closets. An important part of the palace was an arsenal with great stores of weapons. There was a smoothly functioning

system of water supply and drainage in the palace. The walls of many rooms were ornamented with murals, of which battle scenes were the most frequent theme.

At the peak of the Achaean civilisation, shaft graves were replaced by royal tombs of a new type – *tholoi* or corbelled (bee-hive) chambers. The largest of these is the so-called “Treasury of Atreus”. It was covered by an earth barrow, with a passage or dromos leading to the chamber of which the entrance was protected by two stone blocks, one of them weighing about 120 tons. The walls and corbelling of the chamber were formed by fine-dressed stone.

Palace estates formed the basis of the economic structure of Achaean society, their influence affecting all the aspects of the economy. Palaces had numerous workshops for processing agricultural products, spinning, sewing, and also foundries and smithies producing tools and weapons. Besides, palaces controlled the crafts throughout the territories under their rule. Metalworking was particularly strictly controlled. Blacksmiths who lived outside the palace (apparently personally free members of the local communities) received precisely weighed bronze from the palace and handed over their products back to the palace. Exact accounts were kept of all metal – both in the possession of the palace and of separate individuals. Local communities were also obliged to place a definite number of craftsmen at the palace’s disposal.

As the Pylos archives show, the palace was the principal owner of land. All lands were divided into two categories – privately owned and communal ones. The communal lands were not, however, cultivated collectively but usually leased in small lots. Both members of the local community and individuals unconnected with it (e. g., members of the state apparatus) could be lease-holders. The state (the palace) imposed taxes both on private and communal lands. Achaean society had a well-developed bureaucratic machine. Sources speak of a fiscal apparatus consisting of central government and local officials responsible for collecting taxes (mostly in the form of metal – gold and bronze, but also in the form of various agricultural products). They also controlled metalworking in the districts under their supervision.

Slaves formed the lowest stratum of Achaean



society. They were relatively few and mostly belonged to the palace. Pylos documents show that most of the palace slaves were women. As a rule, they came from outside the Pylos kingdom. A characteristic trait of society was the existence of several categories of slaves differing in their position, as well as the absence of a clearcut boundary between slaves and free men. An important social group consisted of formally free commoners who owned land and houses but depended on the palace economically and politically. There was no economic equality among commoners either. The ruling stratum included, first and foremost, members of the state's bureaucratic mechanism, both local and central. The state was headed by a *wanax* (king), whose functions were both political and sacral. The *lawagetas* or warlord played an important role. The higher nobility included priests of the principal temples and military leaders, above all commanders of charioteer units which were the basis of the armed forces.

Little is so far known of the political history of Achaeon Greece. Some scholars believe that a unified Achaeon empire under Mycenaean hegemony existed, but it is more correct to assume that each palace was the centre of an independent state, which was often in military conflict with others. That did not, however, exclude the possibility of alliances of several Achaeon states for joint enterprises. The Trojan War described in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was presumably one such campaign. It is not impossible that the war was only an episode in a powerful colonisation movement which began in the second half of the 2nd millennium B.C. Achaeon settlements appeared on the western and southern coasts of Asia Minor; Rhodes and Cyprus were also actively colonised. The colonisation movement must also have been connected with the development of navigation and sea trade. Achaeon trading stations have been discovered in Sicily and southern Italy; an Achaeon settlement has been excavated at Ugarit. The Achaeans' naval activities were just as vigorous. They were involved in the powerful onslaught on the Near Eastern countries that is usually termed the movement of the Peoples of the Sea.

*The Dorian Conquest and Its Consequences.* "The Dark Age". There are numerous indications that in the 13th century B.C., the powerful and flourishing

Achaeon states began to fear the coming of some terrible events. In many places, new defences were built and old ones repaired, large-scale efforts were made to build on the Isthmus (the bottleneck passage connecting the Peloponnese with central Greece) a mighty wall intended to protect the whole of the peninsula. The Pylos palace archives also point to some kind of military preparations.

The presentiment of catastrophe was fully borne out. As shown by archaeological excavation, the disaster came at the very end of the 13th century B.C. Nearly all the palaces and most settlements were destroyed. The agony of the Achaeon civilisation continued for nearly a century. Late in the 12th century the last of the Achaeon palaces at Iolcos was destroyed, and the palaces at Mycenae, Tiryns, and Athens, where there had still been signs of life, were finally abandoned. The total number of settlements in Greece also sharply fell at that time. For example, 44 settlements were recorded at Argolis by archaeologists before the disaster, but only seven remained in the 11th century; the corresponding figures for Messenia are 41 and 6; for Boeotia, 28 and 2; for Laconica, 30 and 1. No more monumental buildings were erected, and the art of fresco painting therefore completely disappeared. A number of artistic crafts were lost, first of all those which satisfied the demands of the higher strata of society—jewelry-making, ivory carving, glyptic. Links with the outer world were almost completely severed, and ties between the various parts of Greece waned. Writing fell into disuse.

Thus perished the Achaeon states in Greece. The nuclei of these states, the palaces, were the first to be destroyed. The population was also partly annihilated, partly settled in areas least suitable for habitation, and partly emigrated. But society's regress was not so much quantitative as qualitative: Greece's population reverted to the primitive communal structure.

That fatal hundred years in the history of Greece has long attracted the attention of scholars, who keep looking for the causes of these events. According to the traditional explanation, the Achaeon civilisation was destroyed by the invasion of the Dorians—related primitive Greek tribes that had lived in the north of the Balkan peninsula. That theory has recently been the subject of criticism. New solutions and modified variants of the traditional explanation

of the problem have been suggested. These can be reduced to two principal explanations: an internal social conflict in Achaeon society and natural disasters. The former explanation is most popular, but it does not take into account the appearance of Dorians previously unknown in Greece. To circumvent that difficulty, it is suggested to view Dorians as the indigenous population of Greece constituting the bulk of the exploited masses, while the Achaeans are regarded as the rulers. This is believed to be the reason why the Doric dialect was not recorded in the written sources of the 2nd millennium B. C. The Dorians are then said to have overthrown the Achaeans and appeared in the foreground of history. These explanations, however, are obviously artificial and unsupported by the facts. At the present level of historical knowledge, a modified traditional explanation seems to be the most acceptable one. It may be assumed that late in the 13th century Greece was invaded by northern tribes—not only the Dorians but also tribes of a different ethnic nature. That incursion ended in the destruction of the principal centres of the Achaeon civilisation. There was no mass migration, however, and only later did the Dorians come in relatively small groups to the devastated and depopulated land and settled most of it. The old Achaeon population survived in some regions only, of which Attica was the most important one. The Achaeon population ousted from Greece spread eastwards, occupying some of the Aegean islands, the western coast of Asia Minor and even Cyprus.

The period between the 11th and 9th centuries B. C. is the least studied in the history of Greece. It is often referred to as "The Dark Age". The principal sources of its study are archaeological materials and the epic poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. As we have pointed out above, the use of the poems as a historical source involves considerable difficulties. As any epics, they comprise different strata traceable to different historical periods. The poems describe the Achaeans' Trojan campaign, the siege and taking of the city, and the vicissitudes of Odysseus, one of the heroes of the Trojan War, on his way back home. In their content, the poems should reflect the life of Achaeon society at the very end of its efflorescence. But Homer himself apparently lived in the 8th century B. C., and must have had only a vague idea of many objects, and of the everyday life and relations

of the past times. On the other hand, he often perceived the events of the past in the light of the relations of his own time. Finally, some general features of epics must also be taken into account, such as the use of hyperbole, of stereotype epithets and other clichés in the description of characters and their everyday life, as well as the intentionally archaic style.

In the period described here, farming remained the principal occupation of the population of Greece. Most of the cultivated land was apparently taken up by cereals. Horticulture, and wine-making continued to play a great role, and olives were grown on a large scale. Breeding of livestock (cattle, goats, sheep, pigs) also developed. Judging from Homer's poems, cattle were used as a "universal equivalent". Thus, according to the *Iliad*, a large tripod was valued at 12 oxen, and a skilful slave woman, at four.

Important changes took place at that time in the handicrafts, particularly in metallurgy and metal-working. The changes involved both techniques and organisation of production. It was in that period that iron began to be widely used. This fact had far-reaching consequences, revolutionising all spheres of life. The use of iron in the production of tools sharply increased labour productivity. As a result, it became possible for a single patriarchal family to cultivate an allotment of land without resorting to cooperation with other families. The premises thus arose for the economic independence of the family as the basic production unit. Besides, the mining and casting of iron were simpler than those of bronze. With the appearance of iron, there was no more need for expensive expeditions to far-off lands in search of metal; its centralised production, storage and distribution were no longer justified. The need for a centralised bureaucratic mechanism characteristic of Achaeon states also disappeared.

Compared to the Achaeon epoch, the external links of the Greek world noticeably declined, and only towards the end of the period considered here were they somewhat extended. The sea seemed to the Greeks of those times to be a dangerous and alien force. The poets recounted the adventures of the half-pirates and half-traders that sailed the Mediterranean. Trading mostly took the form of barter.

The principal producers in ancient Greece were free farmers. The situation was somewhat different in the regions (typically illustrated by Sparta) where

the Dorian conquerors subjugated the local Achaean population. Thus the Dorians occupied the fertile valley of the Eurotas, subjugating the local population, but the degree of its exploitation was not great.

Polis as a special type of community was the basic form of societal organisation in Greece. Heads of patriarchal families constituting the polis were its citizens. Each family was an economically independent unit, which determined their political equality. Although the nascent aristocracy endeavoured to gain control of the community, the attainment of that goal was rather remote at the time. The polis community performed two most important functions – the defence of the land and of the population from the neighbours and regulation of the relations within the community. Only such poleis as Sparta, where there was subjugated population, developed some features of a primitive state structure then.

Towards the end of “the Dark Age” Greece was thus a world of hundreds of small and even tiny polis

communities uniting peasants cultivating their lands. It was a primitive world, of which the basic economic unit was a patriarchal family, economically self-contained and practically independent of the social environment, a world marked by a simple mode of life and absence of external links, a world where the upper section of society had not yet separated from the bulk of the population, and exploitation of man by man was only beginning. But the Greeks had already mastered the technique of iron production, which sharply increased labour productivity. Given the primitive forms of social organisation, there were no forces yet which could compel the masses of producers to part with their surplus product – it remained within the basic economic unit and could be used for further expansion. But it was here that the enormous economic potential of the Greek world lay. It manifested itself in the next historical epoch, resulting in a rapid flourishing of Greek society.

## Chapter 12

### *Archaic Greece*

8th to 6th centuries B. C. are usually referred to as the archaic period in the history of Greece. According to some researchers, it was at that period that classical society developed most intensely. Indeed, during these three centuries many important discoveries were made which determined the technical basis of classical society. The socioeconomic and political phenomena developed at that time which determined the specificity of classical society in relation to other slave-owning societies: classical slave-owning; a system of money circulation and markets; civil community (*polis*) as the basic form of political organisation; the concept of the sovereignty of the people; and a democratic system of government. In that period, the principal ethical norms, moral principles and esthetic ideals were worked out which influenced the Graeco-Roman world throughout its history—until the victory of Christianity. Finally, the basic phenomena of classical culture—philosophy, science, the principal genres of literature, theatre, architectural orders, and sport—all arose at that time.

The dynamic character of society in the archaic period is clear from the following facts. C. 800 B. C., the Greeks lived on a very limited territory of the southern Balkan peninsula, Aegean islands and the western coast of Asia Minor, while c. 500 B. C. their settlements spread along all the coasts of the Mediterranean, from Spain to the Levant and from Africa to the Crimea. C. 800 B. C., Greece was in fact a rural world, a world of self-contained small communities, whereas in 500 B. C. Greece was already a mass of small towns with local markets; coins were already powerfully affecting the economy, trading

links embraced the whole of the Mediterranean, and not only luxury goods but also commodities of everyday consumption became objects of exchange. C. 800, Greece had a primitive social structure absolutely dominated by peasants, while the aristocracy differed but little from the peasants, and the numbers of slaves were insignificant, whereas by 500 B. C. the Greek world had already lived through an epoch of great social cataclysms, the slave of the classical type had become one of the principal elements of the social structure, different social and professional groups existed side by side with peasantry, and various forms of political organisation—monarchy, tyranny, oligarchy, and aristocratic and democratic republics—existed. In 800 B. C., Greece had practically no temples, theatres or stadiums, while Greece of the year 500 B. C. was a country of countless beautiful public buildings of which the ruins still delight us; lyrical poetry, tragedy, comedy, and natural philosophy all developed in that period.

These comparisons could be extended, but it should be clear already that the period of three hundred years indeed witnessed an extraordinary historical leap. This rapid advance had of course been prepared by the previous development. An exceptional role was played by the spreading of iron tools. Iron axes made forest clearance a much easier task; farmers now used iron ploughshares, picks, hoes, shovels, sickles, and spades, which improved the quality of land cultivation and increased the yields; iron garden shears were also used in olive-growing and viticulture. Iron tools now made it possible to cultivate stiff soils and dig canals for draining

marshlands. Iron tools were also widely used in the handicrafts, increasing labour productivity. Improvement of melting furnaces brought about the invention of soldering and cored casting. Iron tools also made it possible to build roads in the mountains, bridges, aqueducts, and large ships. The development of iron implements facilitated the dressing of hard stone, which was now used in the construction of city defences and temples.

Progress in production had numerous consequences for the development of society. The growth of labour productivity in agriculture and the crafts resulted in increased surplus product. Increasing numbers of people could now be spared from farming, which led to a rapid growth of the crafts. Separation of farming from the handicrafts necessitated a regular exchange between them. The emergence of markets entailed the appearance of a universal equivalent—minted coin, which rapidly spread throughout Greece. Money, the new type of wealth, became a rival of the old one—land property, undermining the traditional relations.

That was the principal trend in the development of ancient Greek society. It led to a rapid disintegration of primitive communal relations and the development of new forms of socioeconomic and political organisation of society. That process assumed various forms in different parts of Hellas, but there was also one common feature in them all—the development of social conflicts. A more or less homogeneous society in which tribal aristocracy differed but little from the peasant commoners evolved into a heterogeneous society consisting of different social strata with conflicting interests.

The principal conflict of the epoch was between the evolving aristocracy and the main bulk of the rank-and-file population, in the first place the peasant commoners. The conflict was complicated by the involvement in it of other strata brought into being by society's economic progress, i. e., the development of crafts and trade.

Greek aristocracy is usually believed to have emerged in the 8th century B. C. The aristocracy of that time comprised a limited group of persons with a specific mode of life and system of values obligatory for its members. Importantly, not only the aristocrats themselves but other sections of society regarded them as the best part of it. The conditions of membership in the aristocracy were believed to

include birth in an aristocratic family, possession of land property (several times greater than the land allotment of an ordinary commoner), and finally a mode of life conforming to the norms of aristocratic behaviour. The aristocrats' domination of the sphere of public life, especially of the administration of justice, was the bridgehead from which they began their offensive against peasants. This point is strikingly illustrated in Hesiod's remarkable epic poem *Works and Days* written late in the 8th and early in the 7th century B. C. The aristocracy used its position of the carrier and guardian of common law in its selfish interests rather than for the benefit of society as a whole. The aristocracy's privileged position was also determined by its military role. At the beginning of the archaic epoch the aristocracy constituted society's main armed force. Only nobly born warriors had heavy armour and fine weapons, so that battles were in effect a series of single combats between aristocratic warriors. Ordinary citizens made up a mass of soldiers armed with light weapons, who played only an insignificant role in the hostilities.

Relying on their land property, dominance in the social and ideological life and in military affairs, the nobles endeavoured to establish control over the rank-and-file members of society and turn them into an exploited mass. Beginning with the 9th century B. C., the links between Greece and the surrounding world were gradually restored. Of special significance were its ties with the East. Fine specimens of Oriental craftsmanship came to Greece as luxury goods. Possession of them was regarded as prestigious and soon became a symbol of the aristocratic mode of life. The changing style of living naturally demanded greater means. In its search for these means the aristocracy turned to international trade which was at that time combined with piracy. But the main source of income, as the nobles saw it, were the peasants, who had to be coerced into giving up part of their surplus product.

Modern researchers believe that the aristocratic offensive against the rank-and-file citizens began in the 8th century B. C., reaching its peak in the 7th century. Although we know little of the details of that process, its main results can be seen from the example of Athens. The increased influence of the aristocracy was expressed here in the establishment of a clear-cut estate structure. Athenian society was

divided into three strata: the *eupatridai*, or highly born aristocrats, the *zeugitai*, or the mass of common citizens, and finally peasants dependent on aristocrats, whose position was sometimes compared with that of slaves. The dominant position of the aristocracy relied in particular on its monopoly of public magistracies; aristocrats were in fact the only members of the community permitted to manage their affairs. Further development of that process resulted in a gradual reduction of the stratum of free peasants and an increase in the numbers of dependent ones. In describing the state of Athenian society on the eve of the reforms, i. e., at the time when the aristocracy achieved its greatest successes, Aristotle wrote that the people were in the position of slaves, and the children and wives of the poor men were also enslaved, not only the men themselves. They were called *pelates* or "sixth-sharers", for it was on these terms that they tilled the lands of the rich. All land was in the hands of the few. If the poor could not pay the rental, they and their children could be enslaved. A similar situation existed in many Greek poleis. This naturally created a great inner tension and gave rise to constant social conflicts.

The "Great Greek Colonisation", a highly important historical event, was also closely connected with this situation. Beginning with the mid-8th century B. C., the Greeks were compelled to leave their native land and migrate to other countries. During three centuries, they founded a great number of colonies on the coasts of the Mediterranean. Colonisation proceeded in three principal directions—western (Sicily, southern Italy, southern France and even the eastern coast of Spain), northern (the Thracian coast of the Aegean, the region of the straits connecting the Mediterranean and the Black Sea, and the Black Sea coast), and south-eastern (the north African coast and the Levant).

The causes and nature of colonisation have been a subject of controversy for decades. Modern researchers believe that the main cause of the colonisation was lack of land. Greece suffered both from absolute agrarian overpopulation (population growth due to a general economic rise) and from relative one (insufficiency of land in the hands of the poorest peasants due to concentration of land property in the nobles' hands). Political struggle was also one of the causes of colonisation (those defeated in a civil war were often compelled to leave their native

land and migrate overseas). But political struggle was mostly an expression of the principal social conflict of the epoch, i. e., the fight over land. Trading is also mentioned as a possible cause: it was important to establish control over the trading routes leading to the sources of raw materials, of metal in the first place.

The cities of Chalcis and Eretria on the island of Euboea were among the pioneers of Greek colonisation. In the 8th century B. C. these important centres of metallurgy were apparently Greece's most advanced cities. Later Corinth, Megara, and the cities of Asia Minor, especially Miletus, actively joined in the colonisation.

The economic basis of the new cities was determined by a number of factors—the natural conditions on the site of the colony, the nature of the neighbouring local communities, the nature of the economy of the parent city, etc. Some of them became major agricultural centres; in a number of cases they subjugated the local population and exploited it much like the *helots* of Sparta. That was the situation, e. g., in Syracuse, the major Greek city in Sicily, and some cities in southern Italy. The colonies of Phocis, including the largest of them, Massalia (modern Marseilles), were mostly trading and handicraft centres. Most Greek colonies were independent of their homelands, although they kept up close contacts with them. In less frequent cases the parent state was able to exercise control over its colonies. Such was the policy of Corinth, for instance. Finally, in very rare cases a colony would be founded as a typical trading station on the territory of a foreign state; a typical example was Naucratis—a Greek city planted in Egypt with the pharaoh's permission. The Greek trading station at Al Mina in northern Syria was merely a separate block in that city.

Colonisation made a great impact on the development of ancient Greek society, particularly of its economy. Although most colonies endeavoured to build self-sufficient economies, the establishment of contacts with the local population and the impossibility of organising all the handicrafts in the colonies resulted in the establishment of very close economic ties with the old centres of the Balkan peninsula and Asia Minor. These exported on a large scale the products of Greek handicrafts, especially artistic ones, and some types of agricultural produce (the



best wines, olive oil, etc.) to the colonies and the local peoples, receiving in return grain and other foodstuffs, as well as raw materials (timber, metals, etc.). This stimulated the development of Greek handicrafts, and Greek agriculture began to work mostly for the market. Thus colonisation on the one hand dampened the social conflicts in Greece, taking masses of landless peasants out of the country, and on the other hand facilitated a profound restructuring of the economic and social system of Greek society.

As has already been pointed out, the pressure of the aristocracy reached its peak in the 7th century B. C., but it was also a time of increased resistance to that pressure. The acute social struggle of that period is vividly reflected in the verses of Theognis, an aristocratic poet banished from his native city, full of hatred for his people:

*He who has never yet known either justice or law,  
Never worn aught but a shabby goatskin on his back  
Grazing outside city walls in the woods like wild deer  
Has been ennobled, and men who were nobly born  
Have become lowly.*

The peasants, who were the main object of aristocratic exploitation, now had strong allies. The literary monuments of the 7th and 6th centuries B. C. touch on a very curious phenomenon in their descriptions of severe social conflicts: the aristocrats' greatest hatred was not for the peasants but for the people they called *kakoi* ("the bad ones"). An analysis of the sources shows that a very specific social stratum evolved at that time—men who attained considerable wealth (mostly through the crafts or trade) enabling them to live like aristocrats without the latter's hereditary privileges.

*Money enjoys universal respect. All the orders  
Have been confused by wealth,*

bitterly wrote Theognis. The *kakoi* aspired to participation in the management of society's affairs, but under the existing social structure all power belonged to the nobles. The *kakoi* were therefore the peasants' ready allies in the struggle against the aristocracy.

The first successes in this struggle were mostly achieved with the establishment of written laws, which limited the abuses of the aristocracy. In the mid-7th century B. C., the laws of Zaleukos from

Locron (south Italy) were adopted; in 624 the laws of Drako of Athens; also in 624, the laws of Charondas in Katane (Sicily), etc.

Several circumstances aided the fighters against aristocratic domination. C. 675-650 technical advances brought about a revolution in military affairs. Heavy armour became accessible to the common citizens, and the aristocracy lost its superiority in the military sphere. Moreover, the type of battle order that best accorded with this type of weapons—the phalanx or compact formation of several ranks of heavily armed *hoplites*—demanded the greatest possible number of warriors. The phalanx's chances of success increased with its depth and length of line. War became a mass affair, the battle order making the nobleman and the peasant equals. The significance of this development was so great that some researchers even speak of the "hoplites' revolution".

Because of the scarcity of the country's natural resources, the Greek aristocracy could never equal the aristocracy of the East in material wealth. Owing to the specific features of historical development, Iron Age Greece had no economic institutions (like the temple estates of the East) on which the aristocrats might rely in their exploitation of peasants. Basically, i. e., in the mode of their economic activities, aristocratic estates did not differ from those of the peasants. Even peasant households dependent on the nobles were economically self-sufficient. All of this largely predetermined the instability of aristocratic domination of society. Finally, the nobles' ethics was also a force which undermined their positions. That ethics was essentially "agonistic" (competitive): in accordance with the ethical norms of that social stratum, each nobleman endeavoured to be first in everything—on the battlefield, in sports, and in politics. These ethical principles had evolved in the previous period, when the forms of societal organisation had been rather loose and the noble's whole life had focused on his estate (*oikos*), which had to be constantly defended by force of arms. These were the formative factors in the evolution of the aristocrats' ethics with its primary concern with their own interests, complete neglect for the interests of the society of which they were members, and constant readiness for rivalry and open struggle. The Greek aristocracy brought that system of values to the new historical period when a cohesion of all its forces was necessary to ensure its

dominant position, but that was not a goal it was capable of attaining.

In most Greek cities, the growing acuteness of the social conflicts in the 7th and 6th centuries B.C. resulted in the establishment of tyrannies, i. e., systems in which power was vested in a single ruler. The concept of tyranny did not at that time have the negative colouring it has in modern society. Tyrannic regimes existed in Miletus, Ephesus, on Samos, in Sicyon, Corinth, Megara, later in Athens and some other cities. Tyrants were as a rule active in foreign policy, they built powerful armed forces, and took great pains to improve and embellish their cities. Polycrates, tyrant of Samos, united the whole of the island in one state, built a powerful navy, erected city walls, and built a fine harbour and a water-line into the city. He was active on the Aegean, endeavouring to establish his control over the major sea routes. The tyrannical dynasty of the Cypselidai which ruled Corinth for seventy years (7th and 6th centuries B.C.) implemented an active colonisation policy to ensure control over the trading routes leading west. Handicrafts flourished at that time in Corinth, and Corinthian products spread throughout the western Mediterranean. It was here that the trireme was invented at that time—a fast warship with three rows of oars, which for several centuries became the principal type of warship in the ancient Mediterranean.

Similar processes were observed in many other Greek cities in which tyrants ruled. But early tyrannies were not regimes that could exist for long—they were doomed because of internal contradictions. The overthrow of aristocratic domination and the struggle against the aristocracy were impossible without support from the popular masses and without economic revival of peasant economy. The peasants, who profited by that policy, supported the tyrants. But when the nobles became less of a threat, the peasants gradually came to realise that tyrannical regimes were no longer necessary. The rise of the peasant economy entailed certain political consequences: in the course of time, tyranny lost the support of the masses and was thus doomed. The crisis in the relations between the tyrant and the bulk of the citizenry ended as a rule in the downfall of the tyranny, the establishment of a republican form of government (oligarchic or democratic) and the formation of the classical Greek polis.

Tyranny was not of course a necessary stage in the evolution of all the polises. It was most typical of those cities which became major handicrafts and trade centres already in the archaic epoch. The formation of this type of classical polis in Athens has been studied better (owing to the fairly abundant sources) than in other cities. As has been mentioned above, at the beginning of the archaic epoch political power in Athens belonged entirely to the *eupatridai*, the nobles who gradually reduced the ordinary citizens to serfdom. As early as the 7th century B.C., social conflicts flared up here. In the 630s, Cylon, a member of a family of the *eupatridai*, made an attempt to establish a tyranny that ended in his death. Soon after, the laws were recorded. Decisive changes, linked with the name of Solon, occurred early in the 6th century B.C. After winning popularity as the leader of a campaign against the island of Salamis, Solon was able to carry out a series of reforms. The most important of these was the so-called *seisachtheia*, or the “shaking off of burdens”. The stones that marked the plots of indebted peasants were pulled down, and the land reverted to their original owners. That was a powerful blow against the aristocrats, who were the principal creditors. The peasants, who had been reduced to the position of tenants on their own land because of their debts, were restored to their status of owners by that reform. Simultaneously it was absolutely forbidden to enslave Athenians for their debts. Moreover, measures were taken to bring the Athenians sold for their debts abroad back to their homeland. Through legislative measures, Solon also endeavoured to stimulate agricultural and industrial production for the market. Political reforms, which ultimately undermined the political dominion of the nobles, were also of great significance. According to the new laws, the extent of political rights was determined by the size of property rather than by noble birth. All citizenry was divided into four property classes, and the Athenian military organisation was restructured in accordance with this division. The citizens of the two upper classes served in the cavalry; the third class (the most numerous one, consisting mostly of peasants) formed units of heavily armed hoplites, and the fourth and lowest category, of lightly armed warriors. A new organ of government was set up—the Council or *Boule*, and the role of the popular assembly grew.

Despite the radical character of Solon's reforms, they did not solve all the problems. Both the nobles, who were deprived of most of their privileges, and the broad sections of the demos were disaffected by the reforms. The demos was discontented because the democratisation of the system was not radical enough; in particular, only the citizens of the two highest property classes had effective political rights, that is, the right to fill magisterial posts of any degree of significance.

After Solon's reforms, acute social struggle in Athens resulted in the establishment in 560 B. C. of Peisistratus's tyrannical regime. With interruptions, the tyranny persisted here until 510 B. C. Peisistratus, who was a eupatrid himself, confiscated the lands of his eupatrid political opponents. These lands were distributed among the peasants. He also introduced state credits for the peasants and simplified legal procedures. Peisistratus conducted an active foreign policy, consolidating the positions of Athens on the sea routes. Trade and the handicrafts flourished in the city, and many construction projects were started. Athens gradually became one of the major economic centres of Hellas. In objective terms, however, Peisistratus's policy led to the undermining of the tyrannical regime's stability, as it increased the importance of the democratic elements which increasingly resented the tyranny. Under Peisistratus's successors that regime fell, and this again increased the social tensions. Soon after 509 B. C., a series of reforms were implemented under Cleisthenes's leadership which finally asserted the democratic system. The most important of these reforms concerned franchise. All citizens regardless of their property status were given equal political rights. The system of territorial division was changed so that the nobles' influence in the rural areas was destroyed. The history of Athens in the archaic epoch was the history of the evolution of the democratic polis.

The development of Sparta went along a different path. As has been mentioned, the Dorians captured Laconica and, subjugating the local population, founded a state at Sparta as early as the 9th century B. C. The state did not evolve here through the society's internal conflicts but as a result of conquest; having emerged at a very early stage, it retained many primitive structural features. One of these was a dyarchy: there were two royal houses possessing equal rights. Another such feature was the strength

of the traditions of collective ownership of land. By and by the Spartans expanded their military activity and attempted to conquer Messenia (the western part of Peloponnese). The First Messenian War ended in the capture of part of the country; in the 7th century, they started the Second Messenian War in order to conquer the whole of that land. It was at that time, as recent research has shown, that the latent internal social conflict erupted in Sparta. The Spartan crisis resembled in its principal aspects similar conflicts that were occurring at that time in the other parts of Greece; essentially, it was a conflict between the aristocracy and the rank-and-file citizenry. During the war, the commoners rose against the nobles, and a long struggle between them resulted in a complete transformation of Spartan society. A system was built in Sparta that was later called Lycurgan, after the law-maker who established it. The tradition simplifies the actual picture, of course: the system was not created at a stroke, taking considerable time to evolve, but its formation was undoubtedly begun during the Second Messenian War. Having overcome its internal crisis, Sparta was able to conquer Messenia, emerging as the most powerful state of Peloponnese and probably of all Greece.

The purpose of the new system was to attain absolute equality among Spartan citizens. All land in Laconica and Messenia was divided into equal lots, or *kleroi*. Each Spartan was given such a *kleros*, but it did not become his property, and after his death the land reverted to the state. Other measures were also taken to achieve complete equality among the Spartans; these included a rigorous system of education intended to mould the ideal warrior; a strict regulation of all the aspects of the citizens' life, which was at all times very much the life of a military camp; a strict ban on farming, crafts or trade as possible occupations for Spartans, and on the use of gold and silver (iron bars were used for coin in Sparta); and severe limitations on contacts with the external world. The political system was also reformed. Besides the kings (who performed the functions of military leaders, judges and priests), the council of elders or Gerousia, and the popular assembly, a new organ was set up—a college of five ephors or “overseers”, the most democratic institution in Sparta at that time. The ephors were elected by the whole body of adult citizens; this college was the highest

control organ which saw to it that no one (not even the kings or the elders) deviated from the principles of the Spartan system, which was the object of pride for the Spartans who believed that they achieved ideal equality.

Historians traditionally view Sparta as a militarist state (these days, some specialists prefer the term "police state"), and there is a great deal to recommend that view. The basis of the "community of *homoioi*" or equals, that is, of the full-fledged Spartan citizens all having equal rights and doing no productive work at all, were the helots or the masses of the subjugated population of Laconica and Messenia. Scholars have argued for years about the best way to define the position of that stratum of the population. According to the most widely accepted definition, the helots were state slaves. They had plots of land, labour implements, and a measure of economic independence. But they had to hand over a certain share of their crops to the masters, the Spartans, thus providing their means of subsistence. According to modern calculations, that share equalled one-sixth or one-seventh of the harvest. The helots had no political rights at all. They belonged to the Spartan state (though not to any individual Spartan), which had absolute power over their life and limb, not only their property. Any sign of protest on the helots' part was ruthlessly suppressed.

There was yet another social group in Sparta called *perioikoi* or "dwellers around". They were the descendants of the Dorians and formed no part of the Spartan citizenry. They lived in communities of their own, and had their own internal self-government (under the supervision of Spartan officials); their occupations were farming, the crafts and trade. They were obliged to contribute military contingents to the Spartan army. Sparta was representative of one of the modes of the development of ancient Greek society; similar social conditions and political structure are found in a number of other Greek societies—in Crete, Argos, Thessaly, etc.

*The Greek Culture of the Archaic Epoch.* Greek culture, like all the other aspects of life in Greece, went through a series of turbulent changes in the archaic epoch. First of all, the ethnic self-consciousness evolved in that period, the Greeks coming to realise

themselves as a single people different from the others whom they began to call "barbarians". There was no sign yet of a superior attitude in this opposition of the Hellenes to the barbarians, but a basis for such an attitude already existed. The ethnic self-consciousness manifested itself in certain social institutions. According to the Greek tradition, the first Olympic games, open only to the Greeks, were held in 776 B. C.

During the archaic period, the principal features of ancient Greek society's ethics took shape, including the combination of the nascent collectivist attitude and the agonistic (competitive) principle. The gradual moulding of the polis as a special type of community destined to replace the loose unions of the "heroic" epoch also called forth to life a new polis-oriented morality, essentially collectivist in nature, since the existence of the individual outside the polis was impossible. The military organisation of the polis (the phalanx battle order) also contributed to the development of that morality. The citizen's highest virtue was selfless defence of his native polis. But the new morality preserved certain principles of the ethics of the Homeric times with its basic element of competitiveness. Political reforms in the poleis were such that this morality lived on, as the reforms did not deprive the aristocracy of its rights but rather raised the common citizenry to the level of aristocracy as far as the extent of their political rights was concerned. Because of this, the traditional ethics of the nobles spread in the masses, although in a somewhat changed form: the desire to serve the native polis best was the guiding principle now.

Religion was also going through a transformation. The unity of the Greek world that was emerging at that time despite all the local differences resulted in the appearance of a pantheon of gods common to all the Greeks. Greater order in the internal structure of society was reflected in greater order in the pantheon, where the functions of the gods were more strictly delimited. The idea of an omnipotent deity was alien to the Greek religious consciousness, particularly at that period of its development: an impersonal force, Fate or *Ananke*, towered above the world of the Olympian gods. A unified Greek religion had not yet arisen owing to political fragmentation and the absence of priesthood, but a great many extremely similar, though not identical, religious sys-

tems already existed. As the polis worldview developed, the conception of special ties between a certain deity and a polis of which it was a patron or patroness took shape. Thus the goddess Athena was closely linked with Athens; Hera, with Samos and Argos; Apollo and Artemis, with Delos; Apollo, with Delphi; Zeus, with Olympia, etc.

Characteristic of the Greek worldview at that time was not only polytheism but also the notion of universal animatedness of nature. Each natural phenomenon, each river, spring, mountain or coppice had a divinity of their own. In the Greek's view, there was no insurmountable boundary between the world of men and that of gods; these two worlds were connected through the mediation of heroes. Such heroes as Heracles were included among the gods for their labours. Greek gods were anthropomorphous themselves, they had human passions and could suffer like men.

The archaic epoch marked the beginning of the formation of Greek architecture. The primacy of social and, above all, sacral architecture is absolutely indubitable. The dwelling houses of that time were primitive; the society's main resources were spent entirely on monumental edifices, and in the first place on temples. The temples of the community's patrons took absolute priority. The developing feeling of the unity of a civic community expressed itself in the construction of such temples believed to be the dwellings of the gods. Early temples repeated the ground plan of the *megaron* of the 2nd millennium B. C. The temple of the new type was born in Sparta, and that was only natural, for Sparta was in fact the most ancient polis of Hellas. A characteristic feature of Greek architecture was the use of orders – a special system of construction which emphasised the building's architectonics and lent a particular expressiveness to the load-carrying and other elements of the structure, revealing their function. A building in one of the orders usually has a stepped foundation on which a series of columns are erected – vertical load-carrying supports for the entablature reflecting the structure of the beam ceiling and the roof. Originally, temples were built on acropolises or fortified hills, which were the ancient centres of settlements. Along with the general democratisation of society, the location of temples later changed, too. They were now also built in the lower town, mostly in the *agora* or main square,

which was the centre of the community's social and business life.

The temple as an institution facilitated the development of various arts. The custom of bringing offerings to the temple became established very early. Part of the booty captured from the enemy, often their weapons, were brought to the temple; gifts were offered on the occasion of release from danger, etc. A considerable share of these gifts were works of art. Particularly important in this respect were temples popular throughout Greece, of which the temple of Apollo at Delphi was the most famous. The rivalry between aristocratic clans and later between poleis contributed to the concentration here of the best works of art, while the shrine's territory became a kind of a museum.

During the archaic epoch, monumental sculpture, an art previously unknown in Greece, appeared. The earliest sculptures were effigies crudely carved out of wood, often with ivory inlays, covered with sheet bronze. Advances in the techniques of stone dressing did not affect architecture alone – they also resulted in the emergence of stone sculpture, while improvements in metalworking brought about the emergence of bronze sculpture. In the 7th and 6th centuries B. C., two types prevailed in sculpture – the nude male figure and the draped female. The birth of the statuary type of a man's nude figure was connected with the principal trends in the development of society at that time. The statue portrayed a handsome and valorous citizen, winner at sports who made his native city famous through his victories. Statues on tombs and figures of deities also followed this model. The appearance of reliefs was mostly connected with the custom of erecting monuments over graves. Later reliefs developed into complex compositions of many figures, becoming an obligatory element of the temple's entablature. Statues and reliefs were usually painted.

Unlike paintings on vases, Greek monumental painting is but little known. Vase paintings offer a better chance of tracing the principal trends in the evolution of art – the development of realistic principles, and the interaction between traditional art and Oriental influences. In the 7th and early 6th centuries B. C., Corinthian and Rhodian vases with particoloured paintings of the so-called "carpet style" prevailed. They usually carried vegetable designs and various animals and fantastic creatures

arranged in rows. In the 6th century B.C., the "black-figure style" was dominant in vase painting: figures painted in black lacquer stood out sharply against the reddish clay background. Most popular in the black-figure style were mythological themes. Athens became the most prominent of the cities where these vases were made.

The greatest achievement of the Greek culture of the archaic epoch was the development of the alphabetic system of writing. Transforming the Phoenician syllabic system, the Greeks worked out a simple and economical method of recording information. Learning to read and write no longer required long years of hard work; the system of education was "democratised", so that practically all free citizens of Greece gradually became literate. Knowledge was thereby secularised too, which, on the one hand, became one of the causes of the absence of priesthood as the carrier of society's bank of knowledge, and on the other, increased the intellectual potential of society as a whole.

The archaic epoch witnessed the emergence of philosophy—an event of extreme importance in the history of European culture. Philosophy was a fundamentally new approach to the cognition of the world, basically different from that which prevailed in the Near East and in Greece of the earlier times. The transition from religious-mythological conceptions of the world to its philosophical interpretation signified a qualitative leap in mankind's intellectual development. The posing of worldview problems, their formulation, emphasis on the human mind as the instrument of cognition, and orientation towards the search for the causes of all that happens in the world itself rather than outside it—these are the features that substantively distinguish the philosophical approach to the world from religious and mythological views. Two principal views of the emergence of philosophy are current in present-day literature. According to one school of thought, the birth of philosophy is derivative from the development of science, quantitative accumulation of positive knowledge resulting in a qualitative leap. According to the other explanation, early Greek philosophy differed from the chronologically earlier mythological system of world cognition only in the mode of expression. Recently, the view has been expressed which appears to be more correct than the other two; it postulates the birth of philosophy from the

social experiences of the citizen in the early polis. The polis and the relations between the citizens within the polis—that was the model in terms of which Greek philosophers conceived the world and the structure of the universe. This is borne out by the fact that in its earliest form, that of natural philosophy (concerned above all with cognition of the most general laws of the universe), philosophy emerged in the poleis of Asia Minor, which were the most advanced at the time (late 7th and 6th centuries B.C.). It was here that the first philosophers—Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes—were active. The philosophy that came into being there was spontaneously materialistic. The search for the material first elements of all that is was the principal concern of the first philosophers. The natural philosophical theories of the first principles permitted the construction of a general worldview and an explanation of the general picture of the universe without resorting to the gods. Thales, the founder of Ionic natural philosophy, believed that water in its perpetual motion was the element of nature; its transformations created all things, which in their turn ultimately became water. Thales pictured the earth as a flat disc floating on the surface of primordial water. Thales was also believed to be the founder of mathematics, astronomy and various other sciences. Comparing records on the successive solar eclipses, he predicted the solar eclipse of 597 (or 585) B.C. and explained it by the fact that the moon stood in the light of the sun. According to Anaximander, the first element of all that is was the *apeiron*, or an indefinite, eternal and endless substance in perpetual motion. Anaximander gave the first formulation of the law of conservation of energy and constructed the first geometrical model of the universe.

The materialism and dialectics of the Ionic natural philosophers were rejected by the Pythagoreans—the followers of the teaching of Pythagoras who founded a religious-mystic society in southern Italy. The Pythagoreans attached paramount importance to mathematics, believing that it was not quality but quantity, not substance but form, that determined the essence of all that is. Ultimately they identified things with numbers, depriving them of their material content. The abstract number raised to an absolute was seen as the basis of the nonmaterial essence of the world.

At the beginning of the archaic epoch, the epic



poems inherited from the previous times were the dominant genre. Under Peisistratus, Homer's poems were recorded in Athens, and that marked the end of the "epic" period. As a reflection of the experiences of all society, epics had to give way to other types of literature under the new conditions. In that epoch of turbulent social conflicts in which men became consciously involved, lyrical genres reflecting the individual's emotions and experiences began to develop. The poetry of Tyrtaeus, who inspired the Spartans in their struggle for possession of Messenia and dominance over the helots, was distinguished for its civic spirit. Tyrtaeus's elegies praised military valour and set down the norms of a warrior's behaviour; they were sung during military campaigns in later times, too, and also enjoyed popularity outside Sparta as hymns in praise of polis patriotism.

The poetry of Theognis, an aristocratic poet who realised that the supremacy of the aristocrats had come to an end, and suffered from that realisation, was imbued with hatred for the lower classes and a passion for revenge:

*Trample the empty-souled commoners hard with your heel,  
Prick them with sharp-pointed sticks, and fetter them fast to a yoke.*

Archilochus, one of the first lyrical poets, spent a life full of misfortunes and suffering. The son of a noble and a slave woman, Archilochus was driven by dire need to leave his native island of Paros for Thasos in the company of some colonists; he fought the Thracians, served as a mercenary, visited "beautiful and happy" Italy, but nowhere did he find happiness.

*My barley bread is kneaded in my spear  
And in my spear flows my Ismarian wine  
Leaning upon my spear, I drink.*

The work of another great lyric poet, Alkaios, reflected the stormy political life of the times. His themes were politics, conviviality, the joys of life, the sadness of love, and the inevitability of death. Merry-making was probably his favourite subject.

*Zeus lets it rain, and terrible from heaven  
Comes winter's breath; the streams are frozen fast  
.....*

*Let's flout the winter: fan the fire,  
And mix sweet wine a-plenty in a mug,  
And then, with ardent pleasure,  
Upon a downy pillow lay your head.*

There is also this exquisite line to Sappho, his great contemporary:

*Sappho, violet-locked and pure, tenderly smiling...*

Sappho mostly wrote of women suffering from love and the pangs of jealousy; of a mother's tender love for her children. The tone of her poems is mostly one of sadness, which lends them special charm.

*Blessed like the immortals to me seems  
He who is sitting so close at your side,  
Your sweet voice hears, and also your  
Laughter enchanting  
Can hear. Truly it sets in my breast  
My racing heart a-flutter.*

Anacreon was a poet of beauty, love, and joy; he never wrote of politics, wars, or civil strife. These lines to Bacchus, translated by Thomas More, are typical:

*"Oh, Bacchus! we shall sing to thee,  
In wild but sweet ebriety!  
And flash around such sparks of thought,  
As Bacchus could alone have taught!  
Then give the harp of epic song,  
Which Homer's finger thrill'd along;  
But tear away the sanguine string,  
For war is not the theme I sing!"*

The genius of Anacreon and the fascinating style of his verse made an enormous impact on European poetry, Russian poetry included.

Towards the end of the archaic epoch, prose emerged as a separate genre in the works of the logographers who collected local legends, genealogies of aristocratic families, and stories of the founding of poleis. The art of the theatre was also born at that time, developing from the popular rites of the cults connected with land cultivation. The tyrants, who liked to have famous poets at their courts, did a great deal to encourage the development of Greek literature. They patronised poets in much the same way as they embellished their cities with beautiful buildings: poets were also ornaments that made the polis famous.

## Chapter 13

### *Classical Greece*

According to the generally accepted periodisation, the classical period in the history of Greece covers the epoch from the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 5th centuries B. C. to 338 B. C., when the battle of Chaeronea put an end to the independent existence of the world of Greek poleis. That was the time of Greece's efflorescence, many phenomena that had developed in the archaic epoch, particularly in the field of culture, reached their peak. It was the time of the supremacy of the polis as a specific form of socioeconomic and political organisation of society. In the view of many researchers, it is the polis form of the organisation of society which explains all the principal traits of the development of ancient Greek society, including those of culture and art. The polis evolved in the archaic epoch, and some of its distinctive traits were fully expressed at that time, but it really flourished at the beginning of the classical period.

The polis is usually defined as a civic community. This definition stresses two elements – the communal character of this social organism and the specificity of this community, its difference from the other types of communities (clan, family, territorial community, etc.). The principal distinctive feature of the classical civic community was its basis – the classical form of property, thoroughly studied by K. Marx who showed that this type of property differed from all the others in its diunal nature, the dialectic unity of the state and private principles of ownership. This feature of the classical form of property explains all the basic traits of the ancient Greek polis, in the first place the coincidence, in principle, of the political collective (the collective of full-fledged citizens) and

that of landowners, the interrelatedness of the civic status and the right to own land. All the groups of the population who had no civil rights were also deprived of the right to own land. The reverse dependence also existed, though it was not so clearly expressed: in many poleis, the loss of a plot of land signified the loss of political rights. The polis as a collective of citizens had the supreme right to own land. The fact that the right to own land and the civic status were mutually conditional, and the social and the political structures basically coincided, ensured, in the ideal, equal political rights for all the citizens. The polis was run by various organs of government (such as the Council and the magistracies), but the popular assembly, which had the ultimate say on all the most important issues, was the supreme organ (even in poleis with obvious oligarchic tendencies). That determined the general trend towards democracy in the development of ancient Greek society.

Another most important feature of the polis was the coincidence of the political and military organisations. Armed citizens formed the military force of the civic community. Being a warrior and fighting to defend the polis were the right, the privilege, and the duty of the citizen. The citizen and property owner was at the same time a warrior defending the polis and thereby his private property.

The economy of the polis was primarily based on agriculture, which was the principal sphere of the citizen's activities. Even in the economically most developed poleis, such as Athens, agriculture was the main occupation of most citizens. In the public opinion, farming stood above all the other types of activity. It was firmly believed that only a peasant

could be a good citizen and warrior, whereas trade and the crafts were less respected, if not downright disreputable. In some poleis, abandoning farming for the handicrafts or trade automatically entailed the loss of civil rights. Even in such an advanced polis as Athens, where these occupations were not regarded as disgraceful, the body of petty craftsmen and traders was made up by metics—foreigners who had moved to Athens from other poleis and had few political rights.

The idea of *auttarkeia* (autarky), or self-sufficiency, was the main economic principle of the polis. Autarky was the economic basis of freedom. Neither a separate individual nor the polis as a whole felt entirely free if their means of subsistence depended on someone else. As far as the individual was concerned, autarky implied the ideal of a peasant, the owner of a homestead who derived his subsistence from it. Autarky for the polis as a whole meant the sum of the autarkies of separate households. The polis system of values was worked out in accordance with these basic principles and continued to exist and exert its influence even when the conditions of life changed. The most essential elements of this system of values were as follows: the firm conviction that the polis was the supreme value, that man's existence outside the polis was impossible, and that the well-being of the individual entirely depended on the well-being of the polis; the idea of superiority of farming over all the other occupations; condemnation of striving for profit, the desire to maintain the immutability of the economic basis and of all the other conditions of life, and the primacy of the tradition. Taken as a whole, the polis emerges as a kind of "peasant republic" with all the traits inherent in such a social organism. It should be borne in mind, however, that the "model" described here is somewhat generalised, whereas historical reality was much more complex, the individual poleis often deviating from that model.

The classical epoch was characterised by yet another important phenomenon, namely the beginning of the wide spreading in Greece of slavery of the classical type, although there had been slaves in Hellas in the previous epoch as well. There were two principal forms of slavery at that time: slavery of the helot type, which existed not only in Sparta but also in some other agricultural regions, and slavery of the classical type, most widespread in the economically

advanced centres. Under classical slavery (best known from Athens), the slave was not only entirely deprived of the implements and means of production but was himself merely "a speaking tool" and as such the master's absolute property. The slave-owner's right to his slave was without any limitations. A thing and not a human being according to the prevailing legal norms, the slave was deprived of legal protection; he was the object and not the subject of law. Slaves had no family, and the children of slave women also became slaves. In Greece, slaves of the classical type were not natives of the country in which they toiled; they were captured in other countries during wars or piratical raids and then taken to slave markets.

In Athens, a decisive impetus to the development of slavery in its classical form was given by Solon's reforms, which brought about an accelerated economic development of Athens and, accordingly, a greater need for manpower. At the same time they ensured the economic independence of the peasants and banned endogenous slavery. The polis became a mechanism for ensuring the dominance of slave-owners over their slaves—the polis's yet another most important trait. At the beginning of the classical epoch most citizens did not of course had slaves, but the number of slave-owners grew with the development of the economy, and the deeper that process went, the more obvious became the polis's function as an instrument of slave-owners' power over the slaves, whose increasing numbers presented a growing threat.

Such was the picture of the Greek polis at the beginning of the classical epoch. It evolved under the particular environmental, socioeconomic, and political conditions prevailing in ancient Greece and was practically unknown in the early civilisations of the Near East, sharply differing from the forms of societal organisation existing there. But the formation and development of the polis was a phenomenon of world-historical significance, since the polis world represented an entirely different civilisation, a new mode of the development of the slave-owning system. At the very beginning of its existence, this world had to defend its own path of development in a severe test of its strength. The end of the archaic and the beginning of the classical period coincided with great changes in the Near East, where the Achaemenid "world" empire arose. Its

westward expansion threatened the very existence of the polis civilisation.

Already in the mid-6th century B. C., the Greek poleis of Asia Minor were subdued by the Achae-menids. The Persians imposed tribute on the cities and in most of them changed the state structure by thrusting on them tyrants loyal to themselves. In 500 B. C., the Greeks rose in revolt. The resistance lasted for five years, but in the end it was suppressed. The Greek cities of Asia Minor were terribly devastated, and it took them many years to recover.

Under the pretext that some of the poleis of the Balkan peninsula had supported the rebels, the Persians increased their pressure on the West. Crossing the Hellespont, they established a bridgehead in Thrace. In their plans for a decisive blow against Greece, the Persians chose Athens as their prime objective. Using their powerful navy, the Persians captured a number of islands and in September 490 disembarked on the territory of Attica near the vil-lage of Marathon. It was here that a decisive battle was fought, in which the Athenian force and an aux-iliary unit from the Boeotian city of Plataea engaged a Persian army which far outnumbered them. The Persians could not stand the onslaught of the Athe-nian phalanx and were routed. The Marathon vic-tory was proudly remembered by the Athenians for many years to come.

Although the offensive was repulsed, both the Greeks and the Persians realised that the fight would inevitably go on. True, owing to king Darius I's death and other events, the Persians were only able to resume hostilities several years later. Most Greek poleis, however, made no serious preparations for rebuffing the Persian aggression. Only in Athens did some significant changes occur. It was in those years that the Athenian state obtained for the first time considerable means from the exploitation, begun at that time, of the silver mines at Laurium. Themisto-cles, the leader of Athenian democrats at the time, proposed a plan for building a powerful navy with that money. Despite aristocratic opposition, the plan was accepted, and 100 ships were built. The imple-mentation of Themistocles's plan made a great im-pact on the subsequent destiny of Athens and of Hellas in general, while at that particular moment it helped to beat off the Persian invasion. Later events showed the correctness of Themistocles's policy.

In the spring of 480 B. C., king Xerxes led a vast

Persian army against the Greeks. Some of the poleis, believing that resistance was useless, accepted Achaemenid rule; others declared their neutrality; and only some Greeks, led by Sparta and Athens, were firm in the resolve to fight for their freedom. The first serious encounter occurred in the Thermopylae pass leading from northern to central Greece. Here a unit of 300 Spartans led by their king Leonidas heroically fought off the whole of the Per-sian army for several days. A traitor led a Persian force across the mountains. Surrounded, the Spar-tans all fell in the unequal battle. Later, a monu-ment in the shape of a lion was erected on the former battlefield. At the same time a naval battle was fought off Cape Artemisium. It lasted for two days, and its outcome was still undecided when it became known that the Persians had crossed the Thermopy-lae; the Greek fleet retreated. The Persian army's breakthrough into central Greece was a terrible blow. The population of Athens had to abandon their city seeking refuge on the island of Salamis and in the Peloponnese. After these defeats, serious dif-ferences arose among the leaders of the Greeks' com-bined forces. The Spartans insisted on the navy's retreat to the Isthmus of Corinth, where the land forces had taken up their positions, while the Athe-nians were in favour of a decisive sea battle. Themis-tocles tried to persuade the Greeks that a battle at Salamis would be greatly to their advantage, as the Persians would be unable to deploy their force in the narrow straits. This time again history proved the Athenian strategist right. The Athenians were resolved to fight to the last man.

*Advance, ye sons of Greece, from thralldom save  
Your country, save your wives, your children*

*save,*

*The temples of your gods, the sacred tombs  
Where rest your honoured ancestors; this day  
The common cause of all demands your valour.*

These lines, written by Aeschylus, who himself took part in the fighting, express the Athenians' mood in those terrible days. The Persian fleet suffered a crushing defeat. The Battle of Salamis marked the turn of the tide in the fortunes of war, but the decisive events happened in the summer of 479 B. C. According to the tradition, the Persians were de-feated on the same day on land near the township of Plataea and in a naval battle off Cape Mycale. The Persian armies left the territory of Greece,

and the Greek cities of Asia Minor were also liberated. Although the hostilities lasted for another 30 years, the events of the years 480 and 479 B. C. changed the entire situation. It was now clear that Greece could defend its independence, and that the Greek poleis had proved their viability.

The consequences of the Greek victory were manifold. The psychological result was most important. The Greeks, particularly the citizens of those poleis who had fought the Persians from the beginning, were proud of their victory over the powerful Achaemenid empire; they believed that it was their freedom that had brought them victory, while the Persians' defeat was explained by the fact that they were all slaves of a "great" king. The idea of a basic difference between the Greeks and all the other peoples developed during that war into the conviction of the Greeks' superiority over the world of the barbarians.

The Graeco-Persian wars greatly affected the whole course of the socioeconomic development of Hellas. Although the Persian invasion had done great damage to the Greek economy, the results of the victory outweighed the damage. Particularly important was the second phase of the war, when the Greeks won victories and made their numerous captives slaves. After the victory at the Eurymedon alone they captured 20 thousand prisoners of war. As masses of captives were brought to the slave markets, the prices of slaves dropped sharply, and people of modest means could now afford to buy them. The Graeco-Persian wars thus contributed to a wide spreading of slavery in Greece and its introduction in all spheres of economic activity.

The consequences of the Graeco-Persian wars were most far-reaching in Athens, which became the largest economic and political centre of Hellas. The subsequent period in the history of Greece was a time of undoubted ascendancy of Athens and its great influence on the destiny of the entire Mediterranean world. The rise of Athens should be considered in terms of the development in three closely connected spheres: foreign policy (the founding of the Athenian naval power), economy (the development of Athens into the largest economic centre of Greece), and domestic policy (the consolidation of Athenian slave-owning democracy).

The first steps towards the establishment of Athens as a naval power were made in 478 B. C.

After the defeat of the Persians in Greece, the alliance of Greek poleis was joined by those cities which had previously been neutral or even subdued by the Persians, including the Greeks of Asia Minor. All of this tended to aggravate the relations, for the Spartans, who headed the armed forces of the alliance, took a very contemptuous attitude towards those who had not participated in the struggle against the Persians from the very beginning. As a result of the frictions, the Spartans left the alliance, and Athens assumed the command. A formal treaty was concluded between the allies, and the sacred island of Delos was declared to be its centre; here the allied treasury was kept and the allied Council sat (hence the name, the Delian Naval League). The command of the League's armed forces was entrusted to the Athenians. It was decided that the forces would consist of 100 triremes, 10,000 foot and 1,000 horse. The larger poleis had to contribute warships and warriors, and the smaller ones, provide the finances for their upkeep. The contributions were apportioned by Aristides, an Athenian statesman nicknamed The Just, and were accepted by the allies without demur.

The League, which was originally a union of equal poleis in the common cause of fighting against Persia, gradually fell under the control of Athens. The ascendancy of Athens, both economic and military, obvious from the beginning, later increased, partly due to the position of the allies themselves. Most of them preferred not to send warriors to the army or the navy, merely paying their dues. Athens encouraged this attitude, and soon only the largest of the poleis (like Samos, Mytilene and Chios) continued to take part in the military operations against Persia side by side with the Athenians. The money contributed by the allies was used by the Athenians to build more ships, thereby consolidating their dominant position in the League. Plutarch, the ancient Greek historian, wrote that, constantly sailing the seas and never letting arms out of their hands, the Athenians, thanks to the allies' unwillingness to serve, received military training in the campaigns, while the allies, having got accustomed to fear and flatter the Athenians, imperceptibly became their tributaries and slaves.

Originally, both democratic and oligarchic poleis were members of the Delian League, but gradually (often as a result of suppression of oligarchic upris-

ings), a uniform political system, following the Athenian democratic model, was introduced in the member poleis. At the same time the allied Council gradually lost its rights, and the policy of the League was increasingly determined by the Athenian popular assembly. Athens had complete charge of the allied treasury, which had been moved from Delos to Athens; Athens alone determined now the amount of the allies' contribution. Even their legal independence was restricted, and the most important legal cases of the allied poleis were now tried in the Athens court.

After the suppression of a rebellion in a polis disaffected by the policy of Athens, it became customary to confiscate part of the rebels' lands and distribute them among Athenian military settlers, the cleruchs. Remaining Athenian citizens, the settlers formed a kind of garrison controlling the situation in a city where unrest was feared. Almost all the members of the confederacy were coastal or island cities whose economy was closely linked with the sea and with maritime trade, and Athenian naval supremacy made them dependent on Athens. Besides, the Athenians endeavoured to control all of their allies' economic activities. They had control of all the sea routes to the Black Sea along which the bulk of grain came to Greece from the Pontic coastal areas; not content with that, they passed a decision according to which all Black Sea grain had to be brought first to the Athenian port of Piraeus and only then could it be taken to other poleis. Athens concluded trade agreements with its allies, which were often weighted in its favour. An attempt was even made to forbid the allied cities to mint their own coin, but it failed.

The Delian Naval League thus gradually developed into the Athenian naval empire—the greatest political force in the Greek world. In its heyday, it embraced about 250 poleis. Using the League's resources, Athens embarked on an imperial policy. The empire evolved in a very complex situation; Athens was often compelled to suppress the resistance of its allies dissatisfied with their subordinate position. Originally, the force that held the confederacy together was the threat of Persian aggression and the need to fight it; the conclusion of the peace treaty with Persia in 449 B.C. brought about the most serious conflict in the League's history. The officially recognised objective for which the alliance

had been set up had been achieved—the Greeks had won the war, the freedom of the Greeks in Asia Minor was now ensured, and the Persians had no right even to send their fleet to the Aegean. A movement to dissolve the League began in many poleis, but in the preceding years Athens had consolidated the system ensuring its hegemony to such an extent that it was able to control that crisis.

After the Persians had been driven away from Greece, the economy made rapid progress, particularly in Athens. There were changes not only in the crafts and trade but also in agriculture. In the first place, slave labour came to be widely used here, and although it did not oust the labour of free men, slaves now appeared in nearly every household. The employment of slave labour did not result in a concentration of land property. Large slave-owning estates were exceptional, and the middle peasant remained the most typical agrarian. But the nature of the economy changed radically: production was now chiefly intended for the market. The area under grain crops decreased, while vine- and especially olive-growing expanded. Most of the agricultural produce was sold, sometimes even exported; not only industrial products but also grain was now bought in the market.

The handicraft industries underwent even greater changes. Apart from the economic advances achieved throughout Greece, the changes in Attica were also due to the special position of Athens as a major city and the focal point for many Hellenic cities. The power of Athens rested on its navy, and shipbuilding and related crafts therefore began to grow rapidly. Merchant ships, as well as warships, were built. The crafts servicing the military (production of shields, swords, etc.) also flourished. Finally, Athenian democratic statesmen aspired to make their city the most beautiful in Greece. A vast construction programme was in progress, which naturally stimulated fast growth of all the branches of the building industry, beginning with stone quarrying and ending with ivory carving and the gilding of statues. It should also be taken into account that the general standard of living had greatly improved in Athens, and that increased the population's needs. An important branch of the Athenian economy was mining. The Laurium silver mines, so famous in antiquity, were on Attica's territory.

Small workshops with two or three workers



predominated in Athens, but in some industries the nature of production and the degree of the division of labour achieved required greater number of workers. A pottery usually had five to eight workers. According to modern scholars' estimates, the normal functioning of the workshop processing the ore from the Laurium mines required an average of 33 workers. Slave labour was much more widely used in the handicrafts than in agriculture. In small workshops, the owner himself, a free man (citizen or metic) and one or two slaves worked. As far as we can judge, free artisans usually planned on buying a slave boy and teaching him their craft, so as to live by his labour in old age. Slaves were inexpensive, and after two or three years the investment paid off. Only slaves skilled in some craft cost a great deal. The larger workshops used slave labour only. The mines and the workshops processing ore – that is, the branches of the economy where the working conditions were worst – employed almost exclusively slave labour. The sources mention Athenians who had hundreds of slaves whom they hired out for work in the mines: Nicias hired out a thousand slaves, Hipponax, 600, Philomonides, 300, etc.

The development of the crafts and the growth of the ratio of commodity output to total output stimulated further development of exchange. The most important import items in Attica were foodstuffs (grain above all) and raw materials. The bulk of grain came from the Pontic cities. Athens took great care to ensure the security of the trade routes, establishing control over the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles and the coastal cities of Thrace, for it was along that route that grain came to Attica. Athens exported olive oil, wine, and products of the art crafts, especially the famous Athenian pottery. Evidence of Athenian trade is found in the Athenian coins discovered throughout the Mediterranean region and in Asia (as far as Afghanistan). Piraeus became a major Mediterranean port, and the Athenian civic community received great profit from the port duties. Generally speaking, the ascendancy of Athens in the Mediterranean area and its control over the sea routes brought considerable dividends. A certain oligarchically-minded author wrote that only the Athenians could have wealth, not the barbarians. Indeed, he reasoned, if some city was rich in ship timber, where was it going to market it unless it had the consent of those who dominated the seas?

Again, if some city was rich in iron, copper or flax, where was it going to market them unless it had the consent of those who dominated the seas? The expansion of international trade resulted in specialisation of the various regions of the world. Miletus was especially famous for its patterned woollen fabrics, Phoenicia, for its purple dye, copper was brought from Euboea and Cyprus, metal wares, from Corinth, Argos and Chalcis (on Euboea), the best wines, from the islands of Chios, Lesbos, Phasos and Naxos; papyrus came from Egypt via Naucratis, the medicinal plant, from Cyrene, etc.

The appearance of the first forms of banks, the *trapezitai*, which grew out of money-changers' establishments exchanging coins of different states, was a reflection of the fairly high level of development of commodity-money relations.

Further development of Athenian democracy was also linked with the successes of Athens in foreign policy and its growing role as a major economic centre. Athenian democracy was consistently successful in its continual fight against the aristocratic circles. Ephialtes and later Pericles, leaders of Athenian democracy, aimed at eliminating from the Athenian constitution anything that ran counter to the democratic principles, and at making these democratic principles really effective. The success of that process was made possible by the growing military and economic role of the poorest citizens. The might of Athens lay in its navy, mostly manned by the poorest citizens. The payment they received during their service was a great help to them economically, but much more important than that was their growing social weight, for everybody realised now that Athens' might and prosperity depended on them. The intense development of the crafts and trade increased the economic well-being of the citizenry. Under Pericles, stupendous construction projects were carried out in Athens, and these, too, provided job for the poorest citizens. The need for a large force of Athenian citizens to control the allies also benefited these strata of the citizenry. The policy of founding cleruchies worked towards that end, too. Landless Athenian citizens received land allotments outside Attica, becoming landowners.

Several political reforms implemented in that period contributed to further democratisation of the Athenian system. The Areopagus lost even the remnants of its former significance; restriction on the fill-

ing of public offices by the poor citizens were finally lifted; laws were adopted which ensured the inviolability of the democratic constitution; and election of citizens to various offices by drawing lots was widely practised. Just as important were the measures intended to ensure the actual participation of all citizens in the management of the polis affairs. The most important of these measures was the introduction of payments for the performance of public duties (participation in court sessions, etc.). Thus a democratic system finally took shape in Athens under which the main body of the citizenry actually participated in the management of the polis affairs.

All these radical reforms were carried out in the years when Athenian democracy was led by Pericles. Son of Xanthippus, who commanded the Athenian fleet in the battle of Mycale, and nephew of Cleisthenes, he was one of the noblest of the Athenian aristocrats who linked their destiny with the victorious demos. He realised the needs of the epoch and of his native city better than anyone else, and that was the ultimate basis of his authority in Athens. He was a talented and well-educated person, a brilliant orator with a superb gift of persuasion.

The consolidation of the Athenian naval confederacy gradually increased tension in Greece. The growing might of Athens caused anxiety in many poleis for various reasons. The oligarchic and aristocratic circles in the member poleis of the alliance were disgruntled at the Athenian policy of supporting democracies. The aristocrats and oligarchs of the poleis which did not join the League took a similar attitude, feeling threatened by its continual expansion. The democratic circles in these poleis, in their turn, mostly endeavoured to preserve their independence. The very nature of the polis as a relatively self-contained social organism stimulated their opposition to Athens.

Athens' greater enemy was Sparta and the Peloponnesian League it headed. The League was not a uniform entity, comprising as it did both Sparta with its agrarian economy and such economically advanced poleis as Corinth and Megara, as well as the poor small poleis of Achaia and Arcadia. The principal aim of that League, in the view of modern researchers, was the preservation of a stable political and social situation. The Spartan political structure rested on the exploitation of a vast mass of down-trodden helots ever ready for an uprising. The Spar-

tans feared that any changes in the internal and external conditions might result in the weakening of Sparta's positions and in the helots' fresh uprisings. The rise of Athens was therefore perceived as a challenge. This attitude was reinforced when Athens supported a helot revolt and later helped the remnants of the rebels to settle in the city of Naupactus. Sparta regarded these acts as a direct threat from Athens. Corinth also feared Athens' growing strength. Already in the archaic epoch, a kind of division of "spheres of influence" between these major economic centres had been established: Athens expanded towards the east and the north, Corinth, towards the west. In the 5th century B. C., however, Athens gradually began to penetrate westwards as well, establishing control over the routes leading to Sicily and southern Italy. Some old Corinthian colonies even became members of the Athenian Naval League. Within the Peloponnesian League, Corinth was the most resolute opponent of Athens, inciting Sparta towards a fight. The position of Megara, another major centre of crafts and trade, was similar to that of Corinth.

All these contradictions were gradually coming to a head, and sometimes led to conflicts, even armed ones, but for a long time neither of the sides dared declare war. The growing frictions finally made the situation intolerable for all those involved, and in 431 a war broke out which the Greeks called the Peloponnesian War. It lasted until 404, and nearly all Greece was drawn into it.

Both the Peloponnesian and the Athenian Leagues pursued extremely far-reaching goals, but the methods of attaining them differed, depending on the nature and extent of the means at the disposal of each of them. The Athenian plan of war, worked out by Pericles, rested on the assumption that the land forces of Sparta and her allies were superior to those of Athens, while Athenian naval superiority was beyond doubt. The basic principle of Athenian strategy, in Pericles's view, must be avoiding at all cost any ground fighting with the Spartans, even giving up, if need be, the territory of Attica, and sitting it out behind the mighty walls of the double city of Athens – the Piraeus, while blockading the Peloponnesians from the sea and strangling the enemy in the coils of that blockade. The leaders of the Athenian democracy were confident that their naval might and the huge financial resources of the Athe-

nian treasury would enable them to win the war.

The Spartan plan was not worked out in such fine detail. There were several basic ideas underlying that plan. First, the Spartans were sure of their superiority over Athens on land and therefore intended to seek a decisive battle in the field. Second, they saw the vital importance of external economic connections for Athens, especially of links with the Pontic regions, from which grain came to Attica; hence the idea of trying to disrupt these links by capturing the coastal cities through which vitally important routes lay. Third, the Spartans believed that the Athenian Naval League was a rather fragile organism, and they mounted from the start a broad propaganda campaign (supported financially and militarily), declaring their objective in the war to be the "liberation" of the Greeks from Athenian tyranny.

Although both plans on the whole proceeded from correct assumptions, in the event, neither of them fully met the real situation. The leaders of neither of the Leagues could foresee the scope and nature of the war. It was fought with great ferocity, as in many poleis it stirred up conflicts between democrats and oligarchs, the former looking towards Athens, the latter towards Sparta. Even slaves were sometimes involved in these confrontations.

The Spartans began the hostilities with an invasion of Attica. In the first period of the war, Spartan forces appeared in Attica nearly each year during harvest time, plundering and devastating the rural areas. This caused grave economic difficulties and badly affected the morale of the Athenians, who were soon beset by fresh misfortunes. An epidemic (most likely typhus) broke out among the crowded population of Athens and Piraeus, taking away one-third of the Athenian army and navy. Although the operations of the Athenian fleet along the shores of the Peloponnese inflicted damage on Sparta and her allies, there were no signs yet that these operations might bring the Peloponnesian League to its knees.

In this situation, discord among the Athenian citizens grew. The peasants, who saw only the seamy side of the war and bore the main brunt of it, were particularly dissatisfied with the trend of the events. As a result, Pericles was not elected to the college of *strategoi* for the first time in many years; he was then tried, and a great fine was imposed on him. A year later, he was again elected a *strategos*, but soon after

died in the epidemic. The struggle in Athens between the proponents and opponents of the war grew. The radical democratic wing became increasingly active, advocating a vigorous campaign to achieve final victory, an all-out mobilisation of forces, including increased financial contributions from the allies, and a rigid imperial policy towards them. This party was led by Cleon, owner of a tannery, frequently ridiculed by the great Athenian comedy writer Aristophanes, who was in favour of peace.

The radical democrats dealt Sparta a serious blow. Owing to Cleon's energy and the military talent of the *strategos* Demosthenes, the Athenian forces inflicted a crushing defeat on a Spartan unit on the island of Sphacteria, taking 120 Spartan hoplites prisoner. The Athenians declared that in the event of further incursions into Attica all the Spartan warriors would be executed. They also achieved some other successes, which, however, brought some unexpected results. In Sparta, the positions of those circles which insisted on a more vigorous prosecution of the war also grew stronger.

Led by the Spartan general Brasidas, a small Spartan unit, consisting mostly of helots to whom freedom was promised, secretly crossed the whole of Greece and appeared on the Chalcidice peninsula. Enlisting the help of the local opponents of Athens, Brasidas captured the city of Amphipolis, Athenian main stronghold in that region, and a number of other fortresses. The Athenians saw only too clearly what threat that posed for them. Cleon was sent to Chalcidice at the head of a large force. A fierce battle was fought near Amphipolis, in which the Spartans defeated the Athenians and both Cleon and Brasidas fell.

As a result, the positions of pacifists were strengthened both in Sparta and in Athens. In 421 B. C., peace was concluded on *status quo* terms. True, neither side fully implemented the terms of the peace treaty. The treaty excited discontent among many Spartan allies, especially Corinth and Megara, since none of the causes of the war had been resolved. In Athens itself, the radical democrats, recovering from the defeat, wanted to resume the war. The militarist party was led by Alcibiades, Pericles's distant relative and ward. A talented military leader, a popular orator, and an educated man, he employed all his gifts in the service of an inflated ambition and was

ready to do anything to achieve power. Alcibiades endeavoured to persuade the Athenians that all problems could be solved by a drive west, against Sicily; all Greek cities of Sicily might be conquered at one blow, which would ensure absolute superiority of Athens over any enemy. The Athenian popular assembly decided in favour of such an expedition, and a great fleet and army were gathered. Alcibiades was appointed leader of the expeditionary force. However, a few days before the fleet was due to sail, some unknown persons smashed the herms—the posts with the statues of Hermes that stood on many Athenian crossroads. Alcibiades's opponents spread the rumour that the deed had been done by Alcibiades and his young friends who had no piety or respect for the religion of their fathers. Despite Alcibiades's demand that the matter be considered immediately, his opponents pressed the decision that the fleet should sail at once, while the investigation in Athens continued: Alcibiades's opponents succeeded in casting suspicion on the military leader. A ship was sent to Sicily with orders for Alcibiades to return to Athens for the trial. Realising that he was marked for a frame-up, Alcibiades escaped to Sparta and betrayed all the Athenian military plans to the Spartans.

That aggravated the Athenians' already difficult position in Sicily. With the arrival of the Athenian fleet, most Sicilian Greeks united in the struggle against the aggression. After Alcibiades's flight, the Athenian forces were headed by men who did not believe in victory and therefore acted sluggishly and hesitantly. Following Alcibiades's advice, Sparta decided to interfere in the Sicilian affairs and sent a task force there which inflicted a terrible defeat on the Athenians, destroying some 200 triremes, several thousand hoplites and cavalry, and 10 to 15 thousand sailors and lightly armed warriors. That catastrophe echoed throughout Greece, where enemies of democracy and of Athens raised their heads. Another blow was struck by the Spartans in Attica. At Alcibiades's prompting, Spartan forces captured the fortress of Decelea and became virtual masters of Attica. The Spartans also announced that they would free all Athenian slaves that would desert to their side. More than 20,000 slaves ran away from Athens. The Athenian crafts received a most severe blow. Taking advantage of the weakening of Athens, the oligarchic circles of a number of allied poleis

revolted and, seizing power, went over to the Spartan side. But that was not the end of Athenian disasters. Taking Alcibiades's advice, the Spartans established contacts with the Persians, and getting gold from them in return for a promise to restore Persian rule over the Greek cities of Asia Minor, built their own navy for the first time. When the Spartan fleet appeared in the Aegean, several other poleis, mostly insular ones, seceded from the Delian League.

All these heavy blows sustained by Athens brought about an oligarchic coup in the city. The democratic leaders had been compromised by the Sicilian disaster and Alcibiades's betrayal; the masses of poor citizens, which formed the basis of democracy, had suffered immense losses; and the popular assembly was in the grip of despondency and confusion. Taking advantage of the situation, the oligarchs succeeded in changing in 411 B. C. the state system of Athens.

But the forces of Athenian democracy had not yet been crushed. The Athenian navy refused to recognise the coup and demanded a restoration of democracy. Alcibiades, who by that time had quarrelled with the Spartans, became a leader of the democrats. The oligarchic power was overthrown. Under Alcibiades's leadership, a series of victories were won over the Spartans, including the triumph in the battle of Cyzicus, in which the whole of the Spartan fleet was annihilated. With Persian help, however, the Spartans recovered. Their fleet was now headed by the talented military leader and diplomat Lysander, who succeeded in uniting the forces of oligarchs opposed to Athens. The situation in Athens was one of confusion and vacillation. As a result, Alcibiades was dismissed from command, and later the *strategoi* who had defeated the Spartans in the battle of the Arginusae Islands were executed on a false accusation. The realisation that a catastrophe was imminent became increasingly stronger; in 405 B. C. Lysander completely destroyed the Athenian fleet, the city itself was besieged and in 404 B. C. surrendered. The surrender of Athens brought an immediate change in its political system; power again was seized by the oligarchs.

The defeat of Athens radically changed the situation in Greece. The Athenian Naval League ceased to exist. Democratic regimes which had been established in most Greek poleis were replaced by oligarchic ones, relying on Spartan garrisons. Sparta

became the unchallenged hegemon of the Greek world. Most modern researchers believe that the Peloponnesian War was the most important landmark in the history of Greece in the classical epoch. It revealed all the internal contradictions of the polis world and signified the beginning of its crisis.

*The Greek Culture of the Classical Period.* The 5th century B. C. is regarded as the zenith of Greek culture. The polis with its distinct tendency towards democracy, and the viability of the aristocratic ethical norms, formed the ideological soil on which the Greek culture of the classical epoch flourished.

New tendencies were clearly expressed in town building. Most Greek cities retained the traditional chaotic system or rather lack of any system inherited from the earliest times, with narrow crooked streets and absence of any conveniences whatever. But the regular system of town planning, born in the epoch of the great Greek colonisation, gradually began to exert its influence on the theory and practice of town building in Greece. Hippodamus, the founder of the theory of regular town planning, apparently lived in the 5th century. Olynthus and Miletus, restored after its destruction by the Persians, were planned in accordance with the ideas of Hippodamus. His theory included more than the principle of gridiron town planning: it also contained the idea of zoning, i. e., the division of the city area into several districts differing in their functions (the public centre, the housing districts, the harbour, the trade centre, and the industrial zone). The democratic trend in urban construction was most fully expressed in the plan of Olynthus where not only the districts but the blocks within them were all of equal size. The structure of all dwellings was also absolutely identical.

The temple remained the main type of public building in that period. In the first half of the 5th century B. C., the most outstanding monuments of Doric architecture were created—the magnificent temples in the city of Poseidonia (in southern Italy) and the temple of Zeus at Olympia. The temple of Zeus was regarded as the most remarkable of all Hellenic shrines, with its colossal gold and ivory statue of Zeus sitting on the throne, by the Athenian sculptor Pheidias.

The Athenian Acropolis complex occupies quite a special place in the history of ancient Greek archi-

tecture. Destroyed by the Persians in 480 B. C., it was restored during the 5th century B. C. The Acropolis ensemble is believed to be the summit of ancient Greek architecture, the symbol of the highest might and efflorescence of Athens. It included a number of structures—the ceremonial gates (the Propylaea), the temple of Nike Apteros (Wingless Victory), the Erechtheion, and the Parthenon, the main temple of Athens dedicated to Athena the Virgin.

The Acropolis ensemble was built according to a plan worked out mostly by Pericles and Pheidias. The building of these splendid edifices provided jobs for the poorest Athenian citizens. Athenian statesmen endeavoured to build a complex of major shrines which would not only make Athens famous but also become the religious centre of the entire Athenian Naval League. Hence the architectural syncretism, the combination in one edifice of the principles of the Doric and Ionic orders (e. g., in the Propylaea and the Parthenon). Groups of statuary were mounted on the pediments of the Parthenon: the birth of the goddess Athena on the eastern one and the argument between Athena and Poseidon over the possession of Attica, on the western. It was a symbolic theme: in those times, the goddess Athena was perceived as the patroness of democracy, and Poseidon, the patron of aristocracy. Behind the external colonnade of the temple a relief frieze ran along the upper parts of the walls of the inner building, portraying a ceremonial procession during the great Panathenaic festival in which both the citizens of Athens and Athenian metics and delegations from the allies had to take part. Inside the temple was an enormous gold and ivory statue of Athena by Pheidias.

The sculpture and painting of Greece in the 5th century developed the traditions of the previous epoch. Gods and heroes, the patrons of the poleis, the ideal citizens remained the principal themes. However, art made a great step towards realism, which was largely due to the spreading of the idea of “mimesis” or similarity as the basic esthetic category. The frozen quality of figures and the schematism characteristic of earlier sculpture were overcome. Statues became more realistic. Three famous masters—Myron, Polyclitus and Pheidias—made the greatest contributions to the development of sculpture in the 5th century B. C. The most famous of

Myron's sculptures is the *Discobolus*. The sculptor showed remarkable skill in conveying the sense of motion in the figure of the athlete. Polyclitus's favourite subject was figures of athletes perceived as an embodiment of the highest qualities of a citizen. His best known works are the *Doryphorus* and the *Diadumenus*. *Doryphorus* is a powerful warrior with a spear, quiet dignity personified. The *Diadumenus* is a graceful youth tying on the fillet of the winner in a contest. Solemn grandeur, a certain aloofness, and heavenly beauty were the characteristic features of Pheidias's works. His statue of Zeus in the temple at Olympia was regarded as one of the seven wonders of the world.

The same tendency towards a realistic portrayal of man is apparent in 5th-century painting, which reached its peak in the works of Polygnotus and Apollodorus of Athens. Polygnotus created compositions of many figures, endeavouring to express the perspective and to make his figures seem three-dimensional. Apollodorus discovered the chiaroscuro effect, thereby laying the foundation of painting in the modern sense of the word.

Greek vase painting in the 5th century was dominated by the so-called red-figure style; the background was covered with glossy black lacquer while the figures were left unpainted and retained the natural colour of clay. Some of the vase painters of that time were influenced by Polygnotus, and their works give some idea of the style of that famous painter.

Greek literature also flourished in that period. Pindar, the last and most outstanding poet of the Greek aristocracy, composed solemn odes in honour of winners at Panhellenic sports contests – Olympic, Pythian (at Delphi), and others. Pindar never described the contests themselves, the victory only interested him as a theme for glorifying the victor's valour, which was not, in his view, the victor's personal quality but something handed down from generation to generation in the aristocratic families due to their divine origin. His epinician odes became expressions of the aristocratic worldview.

The 5th century B. C. was the time of the efflorescence of dramatic art. The most important dramatic genres were tragedies, based on myths about heroes and gods, and comedies, mostly political ones. The most famous names in the history of the ancient Greek tragedy were Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides.

Although the protagonists of the tragedies were, as a rule, gods and heroes, the issues treated in them were usually highly topical. The mythological plot merely served as a vehicle expressing the struggle of ideas. For example, Aeschylus's *Oresteia* described events at Mycenae after the end of the Trojan War, but what was important for the Athenian spectator were the political ideas which the author wanted to express. Thus he glorified the Areopagus, which, in terms of the political struggle of that time, indicated the playwright's anti-democratic stance.

Aeschylus, who lived in the times of the formation of democracy in Athens and fought in the Graeco-Persian wars, was the founder of tragedy with a civic message. His main themes were glorification of civic courage and patriotism. One of the most remarkable heroes of his tragedies was Prometheus, the implacable theomachist, used by Aeschylus as a symbol for the upsurge of the Athenians' creative power. He portrayed Prometheus as an inflexible fighter for the ideals and happiness of mankind, as an embodiment of reason overcoming the power of nature over man, and a symbol of the struggle for the liberation of mankind from tyranny embodied by the cruel and vengeful Zeus.

The tragedies of Sophocles expressed the esthetic ideal of democratic Athens – the same ideal which was conveyed in plastic form in the sculptures of Pheidias. His images were profoundly human, and the spiritual life of his heroes was much richer than in Aeschylus, who often portrayed conflicts between titanic forces. By increasing the complexity of the plot, Sophocles introduced greater variety in the emotions of his characters, showing various aspects of their nature in different situations. His heroes were carriers of noble spiritual qualities, of greatness combined with simplicity and mildness. But Aeschylus's thinking was deeper, and his problems more acute than those chosen by Sophocles. The significance of Sophocles for world literature lies in the artistic images that he created. The incomparably monumental characters of Oedipus, Antigone, and Electra later figured in many works of European literature – the tragedies of Racine, Corneille, Voltaire, and others.

Aeschylus and Sophocles created antique tragedy in its classical form, with moral conflicts as their main theme. Conflicts between the state and the clan, between freedom and despotism, written and



unwritten law, suffering in the name of duty, the relationship between man's subjective intentions and the objective meaning of his deeds – that was the range of problems raised in the best tragedies of Aeschylus and Sophocles.

The tragedies of Euripides expressed the crisis of the traditional polis ideology and the search for the foundations of a new worldview. He was sensitive to the burning issues of political and social life, and his theatre is a kind of encyclopaedia of the intellectual development in Greece in the second half of the 5th century B. C. The works of Euripides posed diverse problems with which Greek society was concerned, and expounded and discussed new ideas. The critics of antiquity called Euripides philosopher on the stage. He was not, however, an adherent of some definite philosophical teaching, and his own views were not distinguished for consistency or permanence. His attitude towards Athenian democracy, which he sometimes praised as an embodiment of freedom and equality, was vacillating, for he was afraid of the indigent mob of citizens whose mood in the popular assembly was influenced by the demagogues. All of Euripides's work is permeated by an interest for the individual and his subjective aspirations – yet another element characteristic of the crisis of the polis ideology. Euripides's characters had nothing in common with the monumental protagonists of Sophocles standing high above the everyday level – he portrayed men and women with their desires and urges, joys and sufferings. This difference was pointed out by Sophocles himself, who said: "I depict men as they ought to be, but Euripides portrays them as they are." His characters, especially female ones (Medea, Phaedra, Electra) are marked by an exceptional depth of psychological insight. The spectators of Euripides's tragedies were compelled to reflect on their place in society, their attitude to life and fellow men.

Politically the most incisive genre was the ancient Attic comedy. Its origin and social leanings made it an art most congenial to the peasants. It is best represented in the work of Aristophanes, who did some of his best work during the Peloponnesian War. The comedies he wrote in those years give a clear idea of the publicistic spirit of his work. Peace was the main theme of his comedies in those years. Aristophanes was a fierce opponent of war, and he used his brilliant talent to fight for peace. In one of

his comedies, *The Acharnians*, Dicaeopolis ("The Just Citizen") concludes peace with the neighbouring poleis and enjoys prosperity, while the boastful warrior Lamachus suffers from the burden of war. The poet described the war as an unbidden guest: "having burst riotously in upon us while enjoying all manner of good things, as a party of noisy roisterers, after a *χομός*, might intrude upon some quiet respectable party. And he did all the harm he could, and began upsetting and spilling everything, and showing fight; and moreover, though I kept inviting him, 'Do seat yourself and join in the drinking, and take this loving cup', he went on all the more burning my vine-props, and brutally spilling all the wine out of our vines". Another peasant, Trygaeus ("The Winegrower"), the hero of the comedy *Peace*, wins peace for all Greece. He leads the farmers of all Greece, armed with picks and spades, to Mount Olympus, where they free from incarceration the goddess of peace hidden by the god of war Polemos. Aristophanes strikingly expressed the hopes and aspirations of simple peasants anticipating the joys of peaceful labour:

*See, how their iron spades glitter and  
how beautifully their three-pronged  
mattocks glisten in the sun! How  
regularly they align the plants!  
I also burn myself to go into the  
country and to turn over the earth  
I have so long neglected.*

Changes in the political situation in Athens after its defeat in the Peloponnesian War affected the spirit of Aristophanes's comedies, which became less trenchant and topical. But Aristophanes continued to tackle political and social problems in the carnival forms typical of the early comedy. In *Ploutos*, the poor man Chremylus seizes blind Ploutos ("Wealth"), cures him of blindness, and everything in the world changes for the better: all honest people become well-to-do.

Aristophanes satirised incisively, courageously, and often profoundly the political and cultural state of Athens at a time when democracy was going through a crisis. His comedies portrayed extremely diverse strata of society – statesmen, military leaders, poets, philosophers, peasants, soldiers, ordinary city dwellers and slaves. The caricatures and typical masks became generalised characters in his work. Using the simplest devices, Aristophanes achieved

acute comic effects, combining the real and the fantastic and reducing the ideas he ridiculed to an absurdity. Aristophanes wrote in a flexible and lively language, ranging from everyday speech, often crude and primitive, to a parody of the elevated style; it was rich in unexpected comical coinages.

The ancient Greek theatre, especially Athenian theatre, was closely linked with the life of the polis. It was in fact a kind of second assembly where the most burning issues, both theoretical and political, were discussed. The likeness was emphasised by the fact that theatrical performances were given on festive days, and the spectators were expected to choose the winner on the artistic merits and message of a tragedy or comedy.

Herodotus and Thucydides, the two greatest Greek historians, both worked in the 5th century B.C. The work of Herodotus had been prepared by the activities of the logographers, who had recorded local legends and genealogies of aristocratic families. A most important feature of Greek historiography of the classical epoch was its concern with the recent past. Herodotus's main goal was the description of the Graeco-Persian wars, while Thucydides was mostly concerned with the Peloponnesian War. A strengthening of the rationalistic principles and a desire to study the real causes of events were characteristic of the development of historiography of that time, especially in its highest achievement—work of Thucydides.

The philosophy of ancient Greece went through a complex evolution in that period. Heraclitus of Ephesus, whose work concluded the quest of the natural philosophers of the previous epoch, lived at the end of the archaic and the beginning of the classical eras. Heraclitus asserted that the eternal process of motion and change is the highest law of nature. He was the first to arrive at the idea of the world's dialectical development as a law inherent in matter.

Spontaneous materialism, born in the Ionic school of natural philosophy, continued to develop in the work of Empedocles and Anaxagoras. The materialist conception of the world reached its peak in the work of Leucippus and especially Democritus. Democritus combined consistently atomistic views with the idea of dialectical development. A characteristic feature of the work of most philosophers of the materialist orientation was a blend of pragmatic

interests and studies with the working out of basic theoretical problems of philosophy.

The sophist movement, which began in the mid-5th century B.C., was a reaction against the primacy of natural philosophy. The Sophists were mostly concerned with epistemological problems, the nature of human knowledge and the criteria of its truth or falsity. That was a major step forward in the development of philosophy, as these issues had not been considered by natural philosophers. Sophistry also arose from the practical needs of the polis: since power in the polis was ultimately vested in the popular assembly, each statesman had to be able to refute the arguments of his opponent by showing their falsity and to substantiate his own positions by proving their truth. In this way, the development of philosophy, combined with the demands of political practice, called to life the Sophist movement led by Protagoras and Gorgias. "Man is the measure of all things," insisted Protagoras, an ideologue of democracy. But that proposition, regardless of Protagoras's subjective political sympathies, opposed the individual to the collective, introducing scepticism and relativism into ethics. With some justification, the bulk of Athenian citizens saw the political theories of Sophists and their rhetorical sophistication as tools for undermining democracy and a means of deceiving the people. At the same time, out of the fight with the Sophist movement arose the idealist philosophy of Socrates, the ideologue of the Athenian oligarchic and aristocratic circles. He insisted that truth is born of argument. He founded the so-called Socratic method of conducting an argument, in which the wise man, by asking some leading questions, compelled his opponents first to recognise the erroneousness of their positions and then to admit the correctness of his own thesis. In Socrates's view, the wise man arrived at the truth through knowledge of himself and of the objectively existing spirit, i. e., objectively existing truth. Socrates strongly emphasised the need for professional knowledge, deducing from it the idea that a person not engaged in politics professionally could have no judgements about it. That was a direct challenge to the basic principles of Athenian democracy, which wanted to make the management of the polis affairs the concern of all the citizens.

A most important development in the 5th century

was the separation of the individual sciences from natural philosophy. Herodotus was not only the founder of historiography but also, apparently, of some branches of geography. Especially significant was the progress in medicine connected above all with the work of Hippocrates. The basic feature of Hippocratic medicine was strict rationalism; in the view of Hippocrates, all diseases were caused by natural factors. He insisted that the physician should treat each patient individually, taking into account the disposition of the patient himself and of his natural environment.

Mathematics developed mostly under the impact of Pythagorean teaching. During the 5th century, it ceased to be the Pythagoreans' exclusive domain, becoming an independent scientific discipline studied professionally by scholars who did not belong to any philosophical trend. Particular progress was achieved in arithmetic, geometry, geometric algebra and stereometry. Astronomy also made considerable advances in the 5th century.

The heyday of Greek culture in that century was linked with the flourishing of the classical polis. The rise of democracy, participation of vast masses of free citizens in political life, fierce political and social conflicts demanding each individual's self-determination, the progress of positive science, extension of the geographic horizons, and realisation of the superiority of the Greek way of life over the modes of life of other peoples – all this determined the features of the Greek culture of the classical epoch.

*The Crisis of the Classical Polis.* Modern students of antiquity define the 4th century B.C. as the time of the crisis of the ancient Greek polis. The crisis was most pronounced in Athens; it did not coincide with a decline in the economy, as earlier believed, but occurred at a time of economic growth. The crisis manifested itself most clearly in the development of a conflict between the polis's traditional socioeconomic structure and the nature of its economic evolution. The polis, which had arisen as a community of landed citizens, impeded the development of commodity-money relations. The citizens' yearning for land was truly ineradicable; part of the money earned by practising a craft or a trade, was saved to buy land. Through "liturgies" or voluntary offices, extraordinary taxes and other means, the polis con-

tinually alienated the funds of wealthy citizens and metics, spending them in nonproductive spheres. Besides, the polis principles did not permit considerable sections of rich Athenian population (e. g., the metic *trapezitai*) to engage in the most profitable forms of entrepreneurial activity because they could not accept land, the principal form of a citizen's property, as security. For the same reason, the metics could not exploit the mines in Laurium. All this was all the more important as the crafts, trade and credit operations were the principal spheres of the metics' activities. All these conflicts were brought about by economic advances and the consequent changes in the character of property. Previously, the predominant form of property in the polis was the antique one, while now a new form, approaching absolute private property, crystallised.

The economic development and the growing role of purely economic factors in society's life entailed changes in the political sphere. The old division of the citizenry into adherents of oligarchy and followers of democracy was replaced by the division into groups with differing economic interests. The group headed by Demosthenes had interests in sea trade, particularly with the northern Black Sea area supplying Athens with grain; the Hyperides group expressed the interests of those whose well-being depended on the Laurium mines, etc. Each of these groups endeavoured to direct the policy of the Athenian polis in a way most advantageous to itself. Although the ideologues of these groups declared their adherence to democratic principles, the declarations often concealed a desire to change the existing structure, e. g., through limiting the number of citizens to property-owners only, or restricting the authority of the popular assembly and especially of the court (*Heliaea*) – the principal defender of the democratic foundations of the polis. In a word, Athenian slave-owning democracy was going through a crisis which undermined its organism like a long-drawn-out illness.

The crisis of the polis took a different form in Sparta. Here, the Peloponnesian War also acted as a factor which pushed the polis towards a critical state. A polis with an archaic structure, which had diligently cultivated primitive equality of citizens, contempt for wealth, the spirit of a closed civic community, a polis which impeded in every way the development of commodity-money relations, sud-

denly became ruler over all Greece. In the years of the war the Spartans had seen something of the world, they had learnt the sweetness of luxury and had become accustomed to money – “the sinews of war”. The wealth that flooded Sparta fell into the hands of men who were ready to use it. The war years had changed the psychology of the Spartiates – they had got rid of many traditional moral values that had stood in the way of winning the victory. The wealth of all Greece, falling into the hands of Sparta, very soon gave rise to extreme economic inequality between different strata of that changed society. The civic community swiftly broke down into the haves and the have-nots. That process culminated in the law, introduced by the ephor Epitadeus, which permitted alienation of the *kleroi*, or land allotments. This destroyed the very basis of Spartan equality. An immediate consequence of that law was a sharp decline in the number of citizens enjoying full rights, since a Spartan who lost his *kleros* also lost many of his rights. Concentration of land property also became a cause of Sparta’s military weakening. It suffered crushing defeats at the hands of the Thebans and lost its power over Messenia, which further aggravated its internal difficulties, since Messenia provided half of the lands distributed among the Spartans.

The forms of the crisis of the polis are not, of course, limited to the Athenian and Spartan models. That process took different courses in different poleis, depending on the character of the polis, as the examples of Sparta and Athens show.

The wide use of mercenaries became one of the most striking symptoms of the polis crisis. Research has shown that the 4th century B. C. saw a continual growth in the number of mercenaries used both by Greek poleis and Persian kings and satraps, and also by the Egyptian rulers that revolted against Persia. There were dozens of thousands of mercenaries in such a relatively small country as Greece, and they were ready to serve for their daily bread only, which clearly shows that the bulk of the mercenaries were poor men driven to risk their lives by hunger. It can thus be assumed that the development of commodity-money relations in Greece and economic progress did not mean that the relative stability observed in Athens existed everywhere else. In the small and economically weak poleis the crisis manifested itself in the loss of land by many citizens. Especially sig-

nificant in this respect was the ethnic structure of the mercenary troops: for the most part, the soldiers came from the poor small poleis of northern Peloponnese (Arcadia and Achaia).

It was in these poleis that the internal social conflicts were most severe. In Athens, the struggle among the citizens usually found expression in fierce debates in the popular assembly, court trials, and banishment of political opponents, whereas in other poleis the conflicts often erupted in civil wars, usually fought with great ferocity. The situation was aptly described by Plato, who wrote that two hostile states existed in each polis – the state of the poor and the state of the rich.

The social conflicts in Greece led to the revival of tyranny in the 4th century B. C., which is called “younger tyranny”, to distinguish it from the earlier one. There was one common trait in the system of tyrannic rule everywhere – the great role played by mercenaries as a most important element in the power structure of the tyranny. Tyrants came to power in Corinth, Sicyon, on Euboea, in Locris, Thessaly and other cities. Euphron, the tyrant of Sicyon, relied on democrats and a 2,000-strong unit of mercenaries. Although tyrannical regimes mostly arose on the basis of democratic movements, oligarchic tyrannies were not rare at all. The principal weakness of tyrannical regimes was that maintaining a hired army required considerable means, which the treasury was usually unable to provide. A polis could not keep a hired army for any length of time. Tyrants were therefore compelled to resort to extraordinary methods of getting money: campaigns against neighbours, confiscation of the property of political opponents, etc. But all these sources were extremely unreliable. The tyrants of Phocis found a way out by robbing the Panhellenic shrine at Delphi. That wealth enabled them to maintain hired army of 40,000 for many years. This fact throws in relief not only the policies of tyrants but also the decline of religious feeling in Greece.

Not only poleis under tyrannic rule were permanently in need of money – the situation was the same in most other poleis. The position became particularly unbearable during wars. Citizens did not want to and could not fight, and the poleis’ armies therefore mostly consisted of mercenaries who had to be paid. A new principle was adopted: war had to feed itself. Enemy, and often allies’ territory was

constantly plundered. The population of captured cities was commonly all sold as slaves. Mercenaries were a striking indication of the crisis of the polis and one of their major problems, which figured prominently in all the projects for overcoming the crisis suggested at that time.

The morality of society changed. The traditional polis morality increasingly gave way to individualism, and patriotism, to profit-seeking. Money became the main factor that determined the individual's place in society. A comedy by an Athenian author of the 4th century B. C. was very eloquent on the subject:

*If you ask me, silver and gold  
Are useful gods—perhaps the only ones.  
You bring them to your house—and there,  
You have whate'er your heart desires:  
Land, houses, maids and ornaments,  
Friends, witnesses and judges. Pay,  
And e'en the gods will be your servants.*

These were the principal features of the crisis of the polis system in Greece in the 4th century B. C. The crisis began during the Peloponnesian War and made a decisive impact on all the aspects of life in Greece, including the course of its political history. The victory of Sparta in the Peloponnesian War signified a radical change in the overall situation in Greece. The Spartans promptly forgot their promises about freedom for all Greeks. Lysander, Sparta's *nauarchos*, or commander of the fleet, established a regime of terror throughout Greece, handing over power in the poleis to oligarchs, mostly his personal friends, supervised by Spartan commanders of garrisons (*harmosts*). All democrats were cruelly persecuted; frequent punitive expeditions were undertaken against recalcitrant poleis; the Spartans imposed their taxes instead of the Athenian *phoros*. It seemed that the harsh Spartan rule over Greece would last a long time. However, two circumstances—one domestic, the other international—put an end to it.

Lysander's great influence and the fact that many Greek cities were controlled after the war by his friends inspired suspicions and fear in the Spartan government, which began to oppose the more decisive actions by Lysander and his followers. Thus, it permitted the restoration of a democratic system in Athens.

There was also the international factor. At the

height of the struggle against Athens, Sparta had promised Persia to hand over to it the Greek poleis of Asia Minor; now, after its victory, it was in no mood at all to honour that promise, which naturally led to a conflict between the two countries. The Spartans became involved in the dynastic conflict in Persia, supporting Cyrus the Younger, who was the satrap of the western parts of Asia Minor. Persia used that as a pretext for a war against Sparta, which was waged in Asia Minor between 399 and 394 B. C. Although the military operations were sluggish, Persia was nevertheless able to deal Sparta a powerful blow by using its tested weapon of subsidies to Sparta's enemies. The money sent by the Persians helped the enemies of Spartan hegemony, the Boeotian League led by Thebes, and Athens, to arm themselves. A Spartan punitive expedition against Thebes ended in a defeat for the Spartan army and the death of its famous leader Lysander. After that, the victors were joined by Argos, Corinth, Euboea, Acarnania, Locris, Chalcidice, part of Epirus, and Thessaly. A long hard fight began. The Persian fleet, commanded by the Athenian Conon, destroyed the Spartan naval forces. It became clear that Sparta would not be able to retain its rule over Greece. In this situation, there was a sharp rise in internal political conflicts in many Greek poleis, where democrats supported the anti-Spartan coalition. The war ended in 387 B. C. with the signing of the so-called Peace of Antalcidas, after the Spartan ambassador at the congress, or the King's Peace. Persia did not want to weaken Sparta excessively, believing that its best interests would be met by a divided Greece. It therefore changed its orientation and supported the Spartans; a peace treaty was concluded which proved to be the highest achievement of Persian diplomacy since the end of the Graeco-Persian wars. An additional guarantee of Spartan hegemony in Greece was a ban on all alliances except the Peloponnesian League. Sparta paid for the support by ceding to Persia its power over the poleis of Asia Minor.

Sparta tried to restore its unchallenged hegemony in Hellas and at first succeeded in it. The most important Spartan achievement was the capture of Thebes, the replacement of its democracy by an oligarchy, and the dissolution of the Boeotian League. But that was the Spartans' last success. Supported by Athens, Theban democrats killed the oligarchs and

made the Spartan garrison surrender. Democracy was restored, as was the Boeotian League headed by Thebes. The Boeotian League was governed by a college of five boeotarchs, of which the most influential were the well-known democratic statesmen Pelopidas and Epaminondas. Taking advantage of Sparta's difficult position, Athens also revived its naval confederacy (378 B. C.). The Second Athenian League was much smaller than the first (as the poleis of Asia Minor, now ruled by Persia, could no longer participate), and it was founded on somewhat different principles. The allies remembered the experiences of the past, and the treaty included guarantees against a renewal of Athenian imperial poleis. The Athenians undertook not to establish cleruchies, Athenian citizens were forbidden to possess land on the territory of allied poleis, and a great role was intended for the syndrion (the council of representatives of the allied poleis), which controlled the League's finances. The restoration of the League enabled the Athenians to inflict a heavy defeat on the Spartans, who were now obliged to reconcile themselves to its existence and officially recognised it. But the final blow to Spartan hegemony was dealt by the Thebans. The war between Sparta and Thebes, which had lasted several years, entered its decisive stage. In 371 B. C., the Spartan army was routed by the Thebans in the battle of Leuctra. The consequences of that defeat were disastrous for Sparta. The Peloponnesian League disintegrated, and the Spartans were now more concerned with the defence of their city than with hegemony. Messenia became independent, and the city of Messene arose on the slopes of Mount Ithome. In the north of the Peloponnese, several small Arcadian poleis formed the Arcadian League, of which the newly built city of Megalopolis became the centre. In the end, Sparta's possessions were reduced to Laconica, and its influence on the affairs of the Peloponnese became minimal.

But the Thebans' great victories did not bring them hegemony over Greece. The long years of war had undermined Theban economy, while the Thebans' former allies rose against them as soon as the prospect of Theban hegemony became apparent. Somewhat later, Athens also suffered a severe blow. Seeing the weakening of Sparta and Thebes, Athenians thought it an opportune moment to revert to their imperial policy, but their allies immediately

rose in revolt. In the course of the Social War (357-355), Athens was defeated, and that was the end of the Athenian League.

Thus the middle of the 4th century B. C. found Greece weakened and disunited. All the major political forces had been undermined, the leading alliances had disintegrated, and no single state could claim hegemony. That process went on against the background of an acute socioeconomic crisis which showed that the classical polis with its basic principles of autonomy and autarchy had outlived its usefulness. The crisis involved increased social conflicts, the struggle between political groups, a severe financial dislocation, and wide recourse to mercenaries.

Members of the Hellenic intellectual elite proposed various plans for overcoming the crisis. Despite differences over particulars, these plans rested on the conviction that all Greece's problems could be solved at the expense of Persia: a united Greece could destroy the rich but weak Achaemenid empire. The intention was not only to plunder Persia but also to seize part of its territory. Poleis would be built on conquered territory where indigent Greeks would settle, while the local population would be enslaved. These ideas found increasing support in Greece, but a campaign in the East was hardly feasible in view of the country's extreme political fragmentation.

In the meantime, a force was maturing in the north of Greece that was destined to carry out, to some extent, the plans worked out by the intellectuals of Hellas but not in the way they expected. The Macedonian kingdom came on the scene, and during the 4th century B. C. it kept growing stronger, more and more vigorously interfering in Greece's affairs.

Under king Philip II (359-336 B. C.), Macedonia achieved power it had never known before. It was mostly an agricultural country; compared with the Greek world, class society and the state developed rather late here. For this reason, most of Macedonia's population in the 4th century B. C. were free peasants who usually served in infantry. Cavalry was the aristocratic force. King Philip reformed the army making it the strongest in the Balkan peninsula. Philip's army was hardened in countless campaigns, and there were many talented military leaders among the king's associates. Capturing the mines of Mt. Pangaeus, Philip began to mint his



gold coin and, unlike most Greek poleis, had no trouble in financing his military and political moves. A sober politician with a fine grasp of the political situation in the Balkans, Philip skilfully interfered in the affairs of Greece. Athens became the main opponent of Macedonia. In the long fight between them Macedonia gradually gained the upper hand, consolidating its positions on the Thracian coast. Philip interfered in the so-called Sacred War, which raged for many years in central Greece, where numerous Greek poleis fought against Phocis. The rulers of Phocis had plundered the Delphi temple and, hiring a considerable army of mercenaries with the money, repulsed the attacks of their opponents. In the course of that war, Philip subdued Thessaly, which added the famous Thessalian cavalry to his army, then defeated Phocis and consolidated his positions in central Greece. Finally, he destroyed the alliance of the Greek poleis of Chalcidice and firmly established his presence on the Aegean coast.

Macedonia's growing might and Philip's increasing interference in Greek affairs resulted in a certain polarisation of forces in Athens and many other Greek poleis. With his enormous wealth, the king of Macedonia was able to suborn a number of statesmen in different cities, but there were also quite a few selfless supporters of Macedonia who hoped that the establishment of Macedonian hegemony would bring political and social stability, and later enable Greece to start a war against Persia.

Philip extended his activities to the Peloponnese. Demosthenes managed to build a rather powerful alliance, including Athens, Corinth, Argos, Thebes and a number of other poleis. The allies raised an army of more than 30,000, which fought a decisive battle against the Macedonians near Chaeronea (338 B.C.). Though the Greeks put up a stubborn fight, they suffered a crushing defeat. That meant the end of the freedom of the Greek poleis. In the following year, Philip convened a congress in Corinth attended by representatives of all the Greek poleis with the exception of Sparta. The congress proclaimed a Greek League (or League of Corinth) under the hegemony of the Macedonian king. Universal peace was declared, wars between poleis were forbidden, as were the interference of poleis in the internal affairs of each other and any changes in the state structure which existed at that moment. A ban was also imposed on redistribution of land, con-

fiscation of property, and remission of debts, all of which was in the interests of the propertied sections of the population. Manumission of slaves for purposes of political revolt was strictly forbidden. The foreign policy of the Greek League was entrusted to king Philip. The affairs of the League were managed by an assembly of representatives of all the poleis. Finally, war against Persia was declared on behalf of Greece and Macedonia, and Philip was elected Supreme Commander of all the allied forces.

Thus ended the most important period in the history of Greece. From that moment, Greece found itself under a foreign power and lost its independence.

The period of crisis in Greece did not signify a complete decline of its culture. On the contrary, it was marked by many important achievements in literature, science, philosophy, and art. A number of outstanding thinkers of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle among them, lived and worked in that epoch.

The crisis of the polis certainly led to great changes in social consciousness and morality; the growth of individualism and the decline of the traditional collectivist morality of the polis became pronounced. But on the other hand, these phenomena stimulated profound theoretical studies in the nature of the polis, the causes of its evolution and decline, its typology and the possibility of creating a stable or "ideal" polis. These problems were worked out on an idealist basis by the pupils of Socrates, above all by Plato. Plato came from an aristocratic Athenian family – his father Ariston was said to have traced his descent through Codrus to the god Poseidon; he received an excellent education and was an outstanding erudite. He was a major representative of the idealist trend in ancient Greek philosophy and the founder of the Academy – the philosophical school uniting his disciples. The basis of Plato's views was the notion of ideas – eternal and immutable prototypes of things, of which the objects of the real world are weak reflection. This theory also served as a basis for Plato's views on the polis. The idea of the polis also existed in the higher world, the world of ideas, and the task of the lawgiver was to build a real polis closely approaching the ideal one. Plato worked out in detail a project for dividing the population of the polis into three groups: farmers, craftsmen and traders engaged in production and exchange and having no rights at all; guards exclu-

sively engaged in military affairs, deprived of property and family, and devoting themselves entirely to the defence of the polis; and finally, wise men or philosophers concerned with the management of the polis and living the same harsh life as the guards.

Plato's project echoed the ideals of a long-gone era—the Spartan system of the time of Lycurgus, and naturally could not be implemented. Plato's attempts to realise it in Sicily with the help of the tyrants of Syracuse nearly cost him his life.

There was a scholar among Plato's disciples whose powerful influence went far beyond his time, his country, and antiquity in general. That scholar was Aristotle. He was an encyclopaedist in the true sense of the word; his interests ranged over philosophy, history, mathematics, physics, zoology, botany, medicine, ethics, theory of art, literature and theatre, and rhetoric. He began his work as Plato's disciple but later broke with his teacher and founded his own school, the Lyceum. Aristotle's natural philosophy was close to materialism. According to Aristotle, matter and form are inseparable; they are not abstract concepts but two aspects of a single life process. The strongest aspect of Aristotle's natural philosophical system was his theory of motion, without which there is neither time, space, nor matter. The theory of the methods of thinking, or logic, complemented that system.

Aristotle created an all-embracing scientific-philosophical system which synthesised all the achievements of the Greek science of the classical period. Aristotle's scientific views were inseparable from his general philosophical principles. He worked on mathematical problems and created a general theory of the qualitative changes and transformations of bodies. Aristotle's works on animate nature are an important part of his scholarly heritage. He described 485 species of animals and was the first scholar to suggest a classification of the animal world. Aristotle's work was continued by his pupils, notably by Theophrastus.

Aristotle also developed a theory of the state in his remarkable work *Politics*—a treatise based on 158 studies, each of them devoted to the state structure and history of an individual polis and carried out either by Aristotle himself or his pupils. Aristotle's analysis of the Greek polis (its essence, types, evolution, causes of decline, etc.) was unsurpassed; he also worked out a project of an ideal state—a more viable

one than Plato's. He proposed to build Greek poleis on lands wrested from the barbarians, on which the citizens would live by exploiting the local population. The wide spreading of slavery led to the emergence of the so-called "slave question" as a problem for sociological analysis. Expressing the very essence of the slave-owning system, Aristotle developed the idea of "slavery by nature", according to which all non-Greeks (barbarians) were intended by nature itself to be Greeks' slaves. Aristotle's economic ideas were extremely profound. He observed quite correctly that the polis mode of life was only compatible with a definite level of economic development, while excessive progress in commodity-money relations resulted in the disintegration of the polis. Just as important were his observations concerning the dependence of politics on the economic interests of various groups of the citizenry. Aristotle's influence on the subsequent development of antiquity and early Middle Ages was truly immense. Translated into Arabic, his works were absorbed by Islamic science, and later the originals of these works and translations into many other languages became some of the most treasured possessions of European and world civilisation.

In the second half of the 5th and the 4th centuries, the art of oratory reached its peak. Legal eloquence assumed the greatest importance; countless cases came to the courts, and this necessitated a knowledge of the laws and the art of persuasive speech. As a result, the profession of logographers, or compilers of court speeches, became established (both prosecution and defence rested with the litigants in the Athenian court). The classic representative of logography was undoubtedly Lysias, who brought the art to perfection; his style was simple, his arguments sober and convincing.

Isocrates, the most famous teacher of rhetoric at the time, was an unsurpassed master of solemn eloquence. His whole activity as a political orator and writer was inspired by a single idea—an alliance of all Greeks for a war against the barbarians. Only a united campaign would save Greece from all its misfortunes—civil wars, conflicts between poleis, the institution of mercenaries, banishment of citizens, poverty and destitution. The wars engulfing Greece should be taken over to Asia, and the riches of Asia, to Europe. That Panhellenic idea permeated all of Isocrates's speeches—only the names of possible

organisers of such a campaign changed. Disappointed in his native Athens, Isocrates turned to the powerful rulers, first Dionysios, the tyrant of Syracuse, and later the Macedonian king Philip. The latter accorded with his ideal of a leader capable of pacifying the Greeks and heading an eastern campaign.

But the great and tragic figure of Demosthenes, one of the greatest orators of all times and peoples, towers above all the Greek speakers. Demosthenes's court speeches were numerous and important, but he acquired his fame mostly through his part in political debate. Both for his contemporaries and later generations Demosthenes was above all a politician, fighter and patriot. He realised quite early the danger of the Macedonian king Philip for the independence of the Greeks, and began a struggle against him. The speeches of Demosthenes against Philip and in defence of the freedom of Athens raised him to the position of a leading statesman. Demosthenes tirelessly endeavoured to stir up the citizen body to vigorous activity, and to build a coalition of the poleis against Macedonian danger. His speeches combined brilliant oratory and great fighting spirit; his passionate conviction and the power of his arguments moved his listeners. He was the last outstanding master of public oratory in independent Greece.

The new phenomena in 4th-century Greek society were also reflected in the development of art. Many prominent sculptors were then active in Greece—Scopas, Leochares, Timotheus, Bryaxis, Praxiteles, Lysippus. All of them abandoned the simple and strict principles of the epoch of "high classicism". The desire to convey the individual's traits, emotions, and inner world became paramount. Scopas usually created sculptures on mythological themes, but his types expressed stormy spiritual experiences (see, for instance, his figure of a Maenad in the grip of Bacchic frenzy, or the faces of wounded warriors, expressing intense suffering, on the pediment of the temple of Athena at Tegea). Hedonistic themes were strong in the work of Praxiteles, who loved to portray Aphrodite, Dionysius and his companions. He became especially famous for his sculpture of Aphrodite of Cnidos.

The same features were inherent in 4th-century painting, of which the major representatives were Pausanias of Sicyon and Apelles. Pausanias invented the technique of encaustic, or hot-wax painting. He

endeavoured to solve difficult technical tasks. Especially famous of Apelles's paintings was *Aphrodite Anadiomena*—Aphrodite rising out of the sea, her body seen through the water.

The development of Greek science in the 4th century B. C. was mostly determined by the work of professional scholars (mathematicians, astronomers, and natural scientists) and, to a lesser degree, by the efforts of philosophers. The greatest scholar of the 4th century was Eudoxus of Cnidus. In mathematics, he developed the general theory of proportions, which was properly appreciated only in the second half of the 19th century. He also invented the method of exhaustion and applied it to the first rigorous proof of the volume of the pyramid. He played a still greater role in antique astronomy, becoming in fact the father of theoretical astronomy. Eudoxus calculated the orbits of planets, compiled a catalogue of the stars, and built the first astronomic observatory. His model of the cosmos based on the notion of concentric spheres uniformly revolving round the earth stimulated the development of spheric geometry and the kinematics of moving points, circles and spheres. Eudoxus's ideas were further developed by his disciples—the mathematicians Menaechmus and Dinostratus, the astronomer Ptolemy who, in his turn, became the teacher of the outstanding astronomer Callippus.

Ancient Greek culture occupies a very special place in the heritage on which human civilisation, and particularly European culture, relied in its subsequent development. In the esthetic sphere, the Greek heritage is not only a source of modern knowledge but also a living and fascinating spiritual force. Antique culture is a constituent part of modern culture, not just its antecedent. Significantly, the turning point in the development of West European art began with the epoch of the Renaissance, or the revival of antique art. As Engels wrote, "In the manuscripts saved from the fall of Byzantium, in the antique statues dug out of the ruins of Rome, a new world was revealed to the astonished West, that of ancient Greece; the ghosts of the Middle Ages vanished before its shining forms."<sup>1</sup> The images of antique mythology were treated in numerous paintings by Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo, Botti-

<sup>1</sup> Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, p. 20.

chelli, Titian, Rubens, Rembrandt, Watteau, Fragonard, Ivanov, Bruni, and in the sculptures of Vitali, Kozlovski, Demuth-Malinovsky, and others. The subjects of antique mythology were used by many great writers and musicians—Dante, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Mayakovsky, Haydn, Gluck, Offenbach, Stravinsky, and others. It is hard to find a single area where the influence of Greek culture would not be felt, and therein lies its intransient significance for all mankind.

*Alexander the Great.* The epoch of Alexander the Great was a transitional one from the classical to the Hellenistic era. That short historical period (336–323 B. C.) was full of events which determined the course of history during several centuries to come. The war with the Persians was begun already under Alexander's father, but the assassination of Philip II in 336 delayed for a while the fulfilment of the great plans for a campaign in the East. On his accession to the throne, Alexander ruthlessly exterminated the assassins of his father and possible claimants to the throne. But the greatest threat came from the outside: in the north, Thracian and Illyrian tribes prepared to invade Macedonia, and in the south, the Greeks were ready to rise in revolt. In this situation, Alexander acted swiftly and resolutely. He led an army into central Greece and camped outside Thebes. Intimidated, the Greeks recognised Alexander's claim to all his father's rights. Just as swiftly, the Macedonian army moved north and defeated Thracians and Illyrians in several battles. At this time, the false rumour of the death of the Macedonian king incited the Greeks to revolt. Realising the seriousness of this development, Alexander returned earlier than the Greeks could have possibly expected him, captured Thebes—the hotbed of the rebellion, razed the city to the ground and enslaved its citizens. He also showed himself as astute politician: the decision to destroy Thebes was taken by the allied Greek poleis.

The rebels thus brought to heel, Alexander turned to his principal task—the campaign against the Persians. In spring of the year 334 B. C., the Macedonian army and the allied Greek forces crossed into Asia Minor. The war was on. The Persian army was greatly superior in numbers, but Alexander's force was remarkably well trained, disciplined and armed.

The first encounter with the forces of the satraps of Asia Minor took place on the banks of the river Granicus; the Persian army was routed in a fierce battle. That opened the way to the conquest of Asia Minor, which in fact did not go beyond capturing coastal cities and establishing overall control over the country. Officially, the war had been declared to be in revenge for the desecration of the Greek shrines during the Graeco-Persian war; Alexander was very skilful at using Panhellenic slogans. He drove away oligarchs in the Greek cities and established democratic regimes, which ensured support from the Greek population of Asia Minor.

While Alexander was busy conquering Asia Minor, the situation in the Aegean became unfavourable to him. The Persian commander-in-chief, the Greek Memnon, captured a number of islands and even threatened to disembark on the Balkan shore. His sudden death gave Alexander a respite. Having conquered Asia Minor, Alexander crossed Cilicia and entered northern Syria. Here again he met the Persian army, this time headed by King Darius III himself. In the battle near Issus in the autumn of 333 B. C., both sides suffered heavy losses, and the Macedonians only gained a victory by a supreme effort. Darius fled in such a hurry that he abandoned his family to its fate, and it was captured by the enemy. In Damascus, the Persian king's travelling treasury was seized, which greatly relieved Alexander's severe financial difficulties. It was apparently after the victory at Issus that he conceived the idea of conquering the whole of the Persian empire.

Alexander then occupied the Syro-Phoenician coast, where Tyre offered the greatest resistance. Relying on the insular position of their city and a strong fleet, the inhabitants of Tyre hoped to withstand the siege. To take the city by storm, a dam was built to connect the island with the mainland. Tyre was stormed and harshly punished for its resistance. The capture of Gaza opened the way to Egypt, whose satrap surrendered as his army was not strong enough to offer effective resistance. The Egyptians received Alexander as their liberator from Persian rule. During his stay in Egypt, Alexander founded a city in the Nile Delta which he named after himself. He made a pilgrimage to the Ammon (Amon) oracle in the desert, and the priests there declared Alexander to be Ammon's son, thus recognising his

divine origin. In this way, his power in Egypt was sanctified by the religion.

In the spring of 331, Alexander moved north. Crossing the Tigris and the Euphrates unopposed, he approached the village of Gaugamela, where a decisive battle, one of the greatest in antiquity, took place on October 1, 331. Although the Persian army was now stronger than at Issus, the Macedonians defeated it again. The central provinces of the Persian empire now lay defenceless. Ancient Babylon and Susa, where the Achaemenid treasury was kept, were captured without battle. The enormous riches accumulated by the Persian kings passed into the hands of the conquerors. Alexander devastated Persepolis, the ancient capital of the Achaemenids. This fact has puzzled many researches, since at that time Alexander was already actively conducting a policy of rapprochement with the Persian aristocracy. It is believed that the Macedonian king wanted to demonstrate to the Greeks his devotion to Panhellenism and the ideas of revenge upon the Persians. The point is that an anti-Macedonian movement led by the Spartan king Agis III broke out at that time in Greece. Not knowing yet that his governor Antipater had already defeated the Greeks, Alexander wanted to win their sympathies.

The defeat at Gaugamela and Alexander's occupation of the entire western part of the Achaemenid empire did not signify a complete rout of the Persians. Darius still had the entire eastern part of the empire in his hands, and he hoped to gather the forces for a further struggle in Ecbatana, the capital of Media. Alexander's irresistible rush frustrated those plans. Darius fled from Ecbatana. A conspiracy was hatched by the Persian aristocrats in his entourage during his flight, and he was assassinated.

During the Macedonian army's march east, into regions practically unknown to the Greeks, there were first signs of discontent with Alexander's policy. Alexander established ever closer links with the Persian aristocracy, declaring himself the avenger of the death of the Persian king. To increase his authority, Alexander began to replace the old Macedonian traditions with new ones, borrowed from the Achaemenids. The old Macedonian aristocracy, which saw the transformation of their king's power after the Oriental model as an infringement of their traditional privileges, rose in opposition. In his struggle against this opposition, Alexander relied on those

aristocrats who entirely depended on him, and crushed it. Parmenio, one of the most renowned military leaders and an associate of Philip II, his son Philotas and many prominent members of Macedonian aristocracy lost their lives. Somewhat later Cleitus, one of Alexander's closest associates who had saved his life in the battle of the Granicus, was also killed. Then came the disclosure of the so-called "conspiracy of the pages"—of young men from aristocratic families who formed the Macedonian king's personal bodyguard. Finally, Callisthenes, Aristotle's nephew and the official historiographer of the campaign, also fell a victim of the persecutions, as he had expressed the discontent of the Greek campaigners who saw that Alexander had no intention at all of sharing the gains of the campaign with the Greeks, completely preoccupied with consolidating his personal power.

The conquest of the eastern satrapies, especially of the southern areas of Central Asia, proved to be the most difficult part of Alexander's drive east. As distinct from the situation in the west, where the popular masses viewed the change in authority with complete indifference, a real people's war against the invaders began in Central Asia, led by Spitamenes, a Sogdian chieftain. The struggle against Bactrians and Sogdians lasted for three years and took a great deal of effort. Alexander had to reorganise his army, adapting it to the new conditions of warfare. He meted out mass reprisals to the rebels, and at the same time tried to attract the local aristocracy to his side. He himself married Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes, one of the former leaders of the resistance, and included Bactrian and Sogdian cavalry in his army.

Alexander now dreamed of establishing his dominion over the whole world; that dream could be realised if he conquered India. Although Alexander was able to conquer large areas in the Indus valley, inflicting a defeat on king Porus, he could not bring his Indian campaign to a victorious conclusion. The army, exhausted by the drive east beyond all human endurance, resolutely refused to march forward. Moving down the Indus towards the ocean, Alexander divided his force into two parts. The larger portion marched overland to Mesopotamia, the centre of Alexander's new empire; the other part sailed on ships, built on the spot, for the mouth of the Tigris. The return proved very difficult for both

forces, but at the beginning of 324 Alexander and the remnants of his army came back to Babylon.

On his return, Alexander had to deal with a number of difficult problems. Many of the satraps that he had left behind never expected him to return from the Indian expedition; they built up armed forces of their own and spent enormous sums of money, behaving as independent sovereigns. Alexander took decisive measures to suppress these separatist inclinations.

Alexander's policy in those years was aimed at a unification of his vast empire. He endeavoured to consolidate peaceful relations between Macedonians and Persians. Apart from other measures, he organised a great wedding party for ten thousand of his warriors who married local maidens on the same day. 30,000 Persian youths were enlisted in his army. He promulgated an edict concerning the return of exiles to Greece and restoration of their property which was a breach of the covenant of the Greek League. He also demanded that the Greek poleis deify him. Numerous new cities were founded on conquered territories; Alexander regarded them as strongholds of his power. He also made preparations for new campaigns, probably intending to conquer Carthage, Sicily, South Arabia. A new fleet was built and an army raised, but at the height of these preparations Alexander died of fever at the age of 33, in 323 B. C.

The scope of Alexander's campaigns and conquests, which opened up new lands to the Greeks, made a great impression on his contemporaries. The argument about Alexander continues to this day. Earlier historiography largely idealised the Macedonian king, regarding him as a genius bearing the high Hellenic civilisation east and thereby carrying out a great historical mission. This kind of unrestrained idealisation has given way to a more sober approach. Alexander's activities defy any simplistic appraisal. He was undoubtedly a major statesman and a great military leader. His campaigns destroyed the Achaemenid empire, which was already in a state of degeneracy at that time, but the Graeco-Macedonian army brought devastation, slavery and death to the conquered peoples. Towns and villages were destroyed, men died, and whole tribes were exterminated. Alexander's empire, which was greater in size than the Persian state, united by force of arms extremely diverse countries and peoples—

highly advanced Greek poleis and Macedonia with its survivals of the primitive communal structure, the Nile valley and Mesopotamia with their thousand-year-old culture and the nomadic tribes of eastern Iran. A purely military entity, the empire had no unified economic basis. The Macedonian conquest largely took the form of capturing major cities and strategically important strongholds. The state that arose on the ruins of the Persian empire strongly resembled the latter. Alexander was content with recognition of his rule and the payment of taxes, which were collected under the supervision of Macedonians and Greeks. There were no major changes, however, in the conditions of life, especially in areas remote from the centre.

At the same time a stream of Greeks and Macedonians flowed east both during the campaigns and especially after them, bringing new forms of social relations and culture. Some of the cities which Alexander founded became centres of political and economic life. The campaigns brought an extension of the geographical limits of the Greek world, new communication routes were established, and navigation expanded. All of this facilitated the development of the economy and of trading links, the beginning of a new period in the history of the eastern Mediterranean regions, marked by complex and contradictory processes of interaction between Graeco-Macedonian and local elements—the Hellenistic period.

Alexander's world empire could not stand the test of time, as it had no firm political or economic basis. But his campaigns affected the destinies of many peoples not only in Europe but also in the Near and Middle East. In the epoch of Hellenism, ethnic, polis and religious seclusion began to break up, new forms of state arose, exchange and commerce expanded, foundations of new faiths were laid, and at the same time the process of polarisation of ancient societies continued, as the class struggle of the have-nots and slaves against slave-owners intensified. It was as a result of Alexander's campaigns that the East and the West truly met, and this encounter affected many aspects of their life, initiating mutual cultural enrichment. Whatever the appraisal of Alexander's personality and activity may be, his campaigns undoubtedly played an important role in bringing the European and Oriental civilisations closer together.



## Chapter 14

### *The Epoch of Hellenism*

The period that followed Alexander the Great's campaigns and the founding of the Graeco-Macedonian empire is commonly referred to as Hellenistic. The term "Hellenism", introduced by the German historian J.G. Droysen in the 1830s, is still widely debated; there is no consensus among scholars neither on the chronological and geographical boundaries of the Hellenistic world or on the significance of that period for the history of mankind.

Hellenism is often interpreted as a purely cultural phenomenon; accordingly, all areas in which the Hellenic and local cultures are observed to have interacted in antiquity are included in the Hellenistic world, some researchers stressing the fact of the interaction itself and the consequent syncretism of Hellenistic culture, others seeing it, above all, as a further development of Greek culture and the "creative spirit" of the Greeks.

On a deeper plane, Hellenism is identified with Hellenistic civilisation. Apart from common cultural development, this concept covers the forms of political organisation and socioeconomic relations characteristic of that epoch (mostly in the eastern Mediterranean area). The historiography of Hellenism was greatly influenced in this respect by the theory of Michael Rostovtzeff (a Russian scholar who emigrated to the USA), according to which the Hellenistic world (including the eastern Mediterranean and northern Pontic regions) should be viewed as a single political and socioeconomic system characterised by stable internal economic links and political balance between the states of the region. In Rostovtzeff's view, the basis of that system was the polis and the "bourgeois class". Owing to these elements,

the Greek urban (i. e., bourgeois) structure prevailed over the Oriental feudal one, and Greek culture spread. Emerging as a result of the conquest of the East, which opened up new markets and extensive spheres of entrepreneurial activity, especially for the Greeks, the Hellenistic world achieved prosperity, which was, however, short-lived and was followed by a decline due to resultant political imbalance and the rise of the "Oriental reaction". Rostovtzeff's theory, with its socio-political emphasis and modern colouring (cf. e. g., the analogy between Hellenistic and capitalist economy), is still sometimes echoed in many modern works on the history of Hellenism.

In their polemics with the trend towards modernisation of historiography, a number of Soviet historians (S. I. Kovalyov, V. S. Sergeyev, A. B. Ranovich, K. K. Zelyin, K. M. Kolobova and others) have proposed a fundamentally different interpretation of Hellenism. Pointing out some of the characteristic traits of Hellenism – the division of labour, the growth of export-oriented artisan industries, intense development of commerce and of money relations, and the emergence of new centres of trade and industry – they emphasise, quite rightly, that all these processes unfolded within a society that was basically slave-owning. In the Hellenistic period, eastern Mediterranean countries were going through different stages in the development of slave-owning relations. In the most advanced Greek states, the polis structure and its characteristic forms of slave-owning relations were in a state of crisis; in Macedonia and the poleis of north-western Greece, slave-owning grew and the political systems consoli-

dated; in Egypt and Near East, the antique forms of slavery and the polis structure spread, and various tribes within the Hellenistic world and in the outlying regions were undergoing the process of the formation of class society.

Soviet historians regard Hellenism as a concrete historical phenomenon within a limited geographical areal, characterised by a combination and interaction of Hellenic and local elements in the economy, socio-political structure and culture of the countries of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East in the late 4th-1st centuries B. C. Hellenism had been prepared by the interaction between the Greeks and the Near Eastern peoples in the previous period; the Graeco-Macedonian conquest lent it great scope and intensity. The new forms of culture and of political and socioeconomic relations arising in the Hellenistic period were the product of a synthesis in which the correlation of the local (mostly Oriental) and Greek elements was determined by the concrete historical conditions. The varying role of the local elements in the development of Hellenistic states affected the mode of social struggles within them, largely determining the historical fates of the diverse regions of the Hellenistic world.

The history of Hellenism falls into three distinct periods: the emergence of Hellenistic states (late 4th-early 3rd centuries B. C.); the moulding of the socioeconomic and political structure of these states and their efflorescence (3rd-early 2nd centuries B. C.); and economic decline, growth of social conflicts, and subjugation by Rome (mid-2nd-late 1st centuries B. C.).

The sources of our knowledge of the Hellenistic period are mostly works by such antique authors as Polybius, Diodorus, Strabo, Cicero, Pausanias, Appian, Plutarch, Justin (who recounted the work of an earlier author, Pompeius Trogus) and some other historians, rhetoricians, poets and comedigraphers. These sources mostly provide information on the socio-political and cultural life of Hellenistic society and are complemented by inscriptions, papyri, cuneiform tablets and coins, which are sometimes our only sources. Their number continually increases through regular excavations and accidental finds in Greece, Asia Minor, the Near East, Central Asia and Egypt. Recently, the so-called Qumran MSS, or Dead Sea Scrolls (1st century B. C.-2nd century A. D.) were found in caves near the Dead

Sea; they provided important information on the religious and social movements in Judea during the Hellenistic and Roman times.

*The Emergence of the Hellenistic States.* At the time of Alexander the Great's death, his empire embraced the Balkan peninsula, the islands of the Aegean, Asia Minor, Egypt, the whole of the Near East, the southern areas of Central Asia stretching as far as the lower Indus. For the first time in history was such a vast territory included within the framework of a single political system. Communication and trade routes between remote regions were established during the conquests through founding new towns, stationing garrisons, sinking wells, etc. Broad opportunities opened up for the surplus population of the Greek poleis (and possibly of Phoenicia and Mesopotamia) to colonise and exploit the conquered territories, particularly the backward regions. However, the peaceful exploitation of the new lands was preceded by several decades of fierce conflicts between Alexander's generals or *diadochoi*, as they are usually referred to.

The army was the most important political force and the mainstay of state power in Alexander's empire. The army eventually determined the state's fate after his death. A short struggle between the infantry and the Horse Guards ended in an agreement according to which the empire was to exist as a single whole, while the imbecile Arrhidaeus, Philip's natural son (the creature of the infantry, who adopted the name of Philip III on accession to the throne), and Alexander IV, Alexander's son born by Roxana already after his death, were declared Alexander's heirs. The actual power fell in the hands of a small group of Macedonian aristocrats who had occupied the highest military and court posts under Alexander. Perdiccas became regent; Craterus was appointed the prostates of the kingdom; Antipater remained ruler of Macedonia and Greece; Thrace was handed over to Lysimachus; Antigonos, satrap of Central Phrygia, was the most influential ruler of Asia Minor. The satrapies of Paphlagonia and Cappadocia, which devolved on Eumenes, a Greek from Cardia who had been Alexander's chancellor, still had to be conquered, in fact, as they were only nominally included in the Macedonian empire. Egypt was to be ruled by Ptolemy, son of Lagos,

while the eastern provinces remained under the power of the satraps appointed by Alexander. Cassander, son of Antipater, and Seleucus occupied important command posts.

Alexander's death and the strife between his former close associates triggered off a resurgence of the anti-Macedonian movement in Greece. It was initiated by the Athenian demos; later, Aetolia, Phocis, Locris and Thessaly joined Athens. Antipater was besieged in Lamia, whereupon the rebels were joined by Argos and Corinth. With the arrival of Craterus, however, the balance of forces tipped in favour of the Macedonians. The Greek fleet was routed off Amorgos Island, and their land forces, in the battle of Crannon (322 B. C.). Greek resistance was crushed, Athens, as the initiator of the war, was punished most cruelly: a Macedonian garrison was stationed at Munychia, a constitution based on property qualifications was introduced, and the leaders of democracy were executed or fled the country.

In the meantime, Perdiccas, playing on the mood of the army that had grown accustomed to live by plundering conquered territories and therefore retained to some extent its aggressive spirit, tried to consolidate his autocratic rule in the eastern part of the empire but immediately ran into opposition from the other *diadochoi*. His actions against Antigonos and Ptolemy, who had disobeyed his orders, began a long period of strife among the *diadochoi*. Our information about that period is extremely fragmentary and confused, and therefore only the main trends of historical development can therefore be outlined.

Perdiccas's unsuccessful campaign in Egypt in 321 B. C. caused discontent in the army, and he was killed by his own subordinates, one of whom was Seleucus. At the same time Craterus fell in an encounter with Eumenes in Asia Minor. A second distribution of offices and satrapies therefore took place at Triparadeisos in Syria in 321. The regency of the empire passed on to Antipater, who ruled over Greece and Macedonia, and soon the royal family was brought over to Macedonia. Antigonos became *strategos autokrator* of Asia in charge of all the royal forces stationed there. The rule of Ptolemy over the recently captured cities of Cyrenaica was recognised. Seleucus became satrap of Babylonia. The conduct of the war against Eumenes and other Perdiccas's followers was entrusted to Antigonos. The

decisions taken at Triparadeisos showed that, while preserving the nominal unity of the empire under the Macedonian dynasty, the *diadochoi* were in fact tearing the state apart.

In the two years that followed, Antigonos nearly ousted Eumenes from Asia Minor, but in 319 Antipater died, handing over his authority to Polyperchon, one of the old generals loyal to the Macedonian dynasty, and the political situation abruptly changed again. Antipater's son Cassander, supported by Antigonos, opposed Polyperchon. In a retaliatory move, Polyperchon, on behalf of the kings, appointed Eumenes *strategos* of Asia (replacing Antigonos) and commander of the regiment of the *argyroaspides*, or Silver Shields, giving him the right to use the royal treasury for recruiting an army. Eumenes soon raised a considerable army, and the war between the *diadochoi* flared up with renewed force. Greece and Macedonia became the principal arena of that struggle, with the royal house, the Macedonian aristocracy, and the Greek poleis getting all involved in the conflict between Polyperchon and Cassander.

To undermine Cassander's position and win the Greek poleis over to his side, Polyperchon promulgated an edict, in the name of Philip III Arrhidaeus, announcing the restoration in Greece of the political status that had existed before the Lamian War, which immediately entailed anti-oligarchic revolutions in Athens and other cities. To increase his authority, Polyperchon invited queen Olympias, the widow of Philip II and mother of Alexander the Great, who lived in Epirus, to move over to Macedonia. Olympias invaded Macedonia with a small force of Epiriotes and, supported by Polyperchon, seized and executed Philip III Arrhidaeus, her stepson, his wife Eurydice and a number of Macedonian aristocrats, including Cassander's brother, to settle old scores. Her actions compelled Cassander, who at that time laid siege to Tegea in the Peloponnese, to move against Macedonia. Surrounding Pydna, where Olympias took refuge, he pressed her extradition in 316, after a long siege. Not daring to execute the old queen on his own authority, he had her tried by the army assembly, condemned and executed. Alexander IV and his mother Roxana also found themselves in the hands of Cassander – as captives or hostages rather than the reigning family.

Cassander's successes in Macedonia and Polyper-

chon's indecision and failures brought about a change in the orientation of the Greek poleis.

Cassander's lenient attitude to the poleis that had used to fight against him and his restoration of Thebes destroyed by Alexander in 335 consolidated and expanded his power basis in Greece. His marriage to Thessalonice, daughter of Philip II and Alexander's half-sister, opened a legitimate path to the Macedonian throne for Cassander, but the situation in the eastern part of the empire kept him from taking the last decisive step to royal power.

The struggle between Eumenes and Antigonus shifted east, to Persis and Susiana. Eumenes combined his forces with those of the eastern satrapies, but the alliance was extremely fragile, as the allies' interests differed. Eumenes himself entirely depended on his army, and only his skill as a military leader enabled him to hold out for several years against Antigonus. After the first failure, he was handed over to the enemy by his associates the *argyroaspides* in exchange for the army transport (their property, their wives and children) seized by Antigonus, and then the troops themselves went over to Antigonus's side (late 317-early 316 B. C.). The satraps, Eumenes's former allies, ceased resistance, recognizing Antigonus's authority as the *strategos* of Asia.

Antigonus took pains to consolidate his power over the most important Near Eastern satrapies. By 316, he was the most powerful of the *diadochoi*, with vast financial resources that could be used to maintain a great army. The threat arose of an expansion of his rule to other satrapies as well, which made Seleucus, Ptolemy and Cassander conclude an alliance against Antigonus. The alliance was joined by Lysimachus, who, preoccupied with the expansion and consolidation of his possessions in Thrace and the western Black Sea coast, had not interfered in the struggle of the *diadochoi*. A new series of fierce battles began on land and sea, all over Syria, Phoenicia, Babylonia, Asia Minor, and Greece.

For several years, the war between Antigonus and the coalition was in the balance, and only in 312 did Ptolemy win an important victory near Gaza in Syria. In 311, a truce was concluded between Antigonus, Ptolemy, Cassander, and Lysimachus, but it was quite unsatisfactory to all the parties: Antigonus was compelled to recognize Cassander as the *strategos* of Europe, Cassander had to agree to independence

for the Greek cities, Ptolemy, to give up his claims to Syria, and Lysimachus, to Hellespontine Phrygia. Although the name of king Alexander IV still figured in the text of the treaty, the *diadochoi* already acted as independent rulers of the territories they had carved out for themselves.

A new phase in the war between the *diadochoi* began in 307. By that time, the last vestiges of formal links between the parts of Alexander's former empire had disappeared, as Roxana and her son were assassinated at Cassander's orders. Apparently aspiring to seize Macedonia, Antigonus began to prepare a bridgehead in Greece. The Greek poleis played an important role as strategic strongholds, and also as arsenals of weapons and sources of reinforcements for the army:

The relationship between the *diadochoi* and the poleis also had a socio-political aspect, since the armies largely consisted of Greek mercenaries. Playing on the socio-political conflicts within the poleis and their traditional aspirations towards political independence, the *diadochoi* proclaimed "freedom" for the Greek cities. The demagogic nature of the manifestoes proclaiming the liberation of Greek poleis is clear from surviving inscription from the city of Scepsis containing Antigonus's message on the occasion of the peace treaty of 311, in which the agreement between the *diadochoi* was presented as a proof of Antigonus's solicitude "for the freedom of the Hellenes, to which we (i. e., Antigonus) have made considerable concessions". The *diadochoi* supported now the demos, now the oligarchs, using these levers to gain the consent of the poleis to station their garrisons on their territory. Political revolutions were accompanied by confiscations, banishments and executions, and conflicts between the *diadochoi* over possession of the poleis entailed harsh reprisals and plunder.

In 307, Antigonus's son Demetrius led a powerful fleet to Athens and announced the "liberation" of Greek poleis. He drove Macedonian garrisons out of Megara and Athens, but success in Greece largely depended on naval superiority; here, Ptolemy was the most serious opponent, with his powerful fleet and the harbours of the dependent and allied Greek poleis. The principal battles were therefore fought near the islands of the Mediterranean and Aegean. In 306, Demetrius defeated Ptolemy's fleet off Salamis in Cyprus. After that major victory Anti-

gonus assumed the royal title, conferring the same dignity on Demetrius; he thereby claimed the Macedonian throne. In response, Ptolemy and the other *diadochoi* did likewise. A campaign against Egypt which Antigonus undertook proved a failure; he then delivered a blow against Rhodes, one of Ptolemy's most important allies, strategically and economically. After a two-year siege (305-304 B. C.) by Demetrius, who was nicknamed Poliorcetes ("Besieger"), Rhodes was compelled to take the side of Antigonus. Only after that could Demetrius achieve major successes in Greece: he drove Macedonian garrisons out of several cities of the Peloponnese, restored the Corinthian League, proclaimed all Greece "free", and moved on Thessaly. The threat to Cassander and Lysimachus became imminent.

At that time Seleucus, taking advantage of Antigonus's preoccupation with the affairs of the west, went on a campaign through eastern satrapies as far as India, and returned to Babylon with sufficient means and military forces to go to war with Antigonus. Again all Antigonus's enemies united against him. In a decisive battle near Ipsus in 301, the combined forces of Lysimachus, Seleucus and Cassander routed the forces of Antigonus; Antigonus himself fell in battle, and his possessions were divided, mostly between Seleucus and Lysimachus.

The battle of Ipsus in a way marked the beginning of one of the major Hellenistic states, the kingdom of the Seleucids which included all the Middle Eastern and some Near Eastern satrapies of Alexander's empire and some areas of Asia Minor. The boundaries of the Ptolemy kingdom had been defined somewhat earlier: it included Egypt, Cyrenaica and Coele Syria. In 297/6, the kingdom of Bithynia emerged, and in 297 the Pontic kingdom.

Further peripeteias of the struggle between the *diadochoi* mostly took place on the territory of Greece, Macedonia and Asia Minor. After Cassander's death in 298, the struggle for the Macedonian throne broke out. The throne was claimed by Cassander's sons, as well as Demetrius Poliorcetes and Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, one of the most talented military leaders of the times. At first, Demetrius gained the upper hand, but already in 288, Lysimachus and Pyrrhus saw their chance when Demetrius's despotic forms of government caused widespread discontent among Macedonians; they banished Demetrius and divided Macedonia into two

parts. Soon, however, Lysimachus gained ascendancy over Pyrrhus and in 285 united Thrace and Macedonia in one kingdom, continuing also to expand his possessions in northwestern Asia Minor.

Lysimachus's rise led him to a confrontation with Seleucus. In the battle at Corupedion (in Lydia, not far from Sardis) in 281, Lysimachus suffered a defeat and was killed. Seleucus, whose power now extended nearly over all the Asian lands conquered by the Macedonians and the Greeks, could now claim the Macedonian throne and restore the unity of the empire built by Alexander. But that proved impossible. In 280, on his way to Macedonia Seleucus was killed by Ptolemy Ceraunus who apparently acted with the tacit consent of the Macedonian aristocracy hostile to Seleucus and the political regime he established in his possessions. That is the only explanation for Ptolemy Ceraunus's being proclaimed king of Macedonia.

Apart from the devastating dynastic wars, in the early 270s Macedonia and Greece suffered destructive inroads by Celtic tribes, whose mass migrations had involved the whole of southern Europe late in the 4th century. In the first conflict with the Galatian Celts the Macedonians were defeated, and Ptolemy Ceraunus was killed. The second wave of the Celtic invasion reached Delphi, and was only stopped by the united efforts of the poleis of the Delphi Amphictionic League (Boeotia and Phocis) and Aetolia. The Celtic invasion was finally checked only in 277 by Antigonus Gonatas, son of Demetrius Poliorcetes, who continued to hold sway over some Greek cities captured by his father and had a powerful army and navy at his disposal. In the battle near Lysimachia in Thrace he inflicted a crushing defeat on a large force of the Galatians and thereby not only relieved Macedonia and Greece from the threat of Celtic invasion but also won access to the Macedonian throne. Soon he was proclaimed king of Macedonia, starting the new dynasty of the Antigonids, which united southern Thrace and Macedonia under its rule. In this way, the third major Hellenistic state became a relatively stable territorial and political entity.

In the fifty years of strife between the *diadochoi*, a new, Hellenistic society with a complex social structure and a new type of state evolved. The activities of the *diadochoi*, guided by selfish motives, ultimately

manifested certain objective tendencies in the historical development of the Eastern Mediterranean and the Near East—the need for close economic links between the hinterland and the coastal regions as well as between the separate areas of the Mediterranean, and at the same time the tendency towards preserving the existing ethnic community and the traditional political and cultural unity of the separate regions; the need for safe and regular trade links and the development of cities as centres of trade and handicrafts; the need for cultivating new lands to feed the increasing population, and finally the need for cultural interaction as the necessary condition for further development of culture. The individual traits of the statesmen competing for power, their military and political talent or lack of it, political short-sightedness, energy and unscrupulousness in the attainment of their goals, ruthlessness, contempt for human life, greed, and so on—all this made the events highly involved, acutely dramatic, and to some extent fortuitous. Still, certain common features of the *diadochoi*'s policies are obvious.

Each of them endeavoured to unite under his rule inland and coastal areas and to ensure his domination over the major routes, commercial centres and harbours. Each of them faced the problem of maintaining a strong army as the only real mainstay of power. The cadre of the army consisted as a rule of Macedonians and Greeks who had formerly served in the royal army or in the garrisons left in various fortresses during Alexander's campaigns, and of mercenaries recruited in Greece. In part, the armies were paid and kept out of the booty of Alexander or the *diadochoi* themselves, but collecting taxes or tribute from the local population was also a vital problem necessitating the organisation of the administration of conquered territories and of well-ordered economic life. These issues apparently proved decisive for the consolidation of the positions of the *diadochoi*. For instance, Antigonos, who seized the whole of the royal treasury in Asia, apparently did less than the other *diadochoi* for the economy and administration of the lands under his control, and that ultimately determined the outcome of the struggle, to some extent.

In all the regions except Macedonia, each of the *diadochoi* faced the problem of the relations with the local non-Greek population. Two tendencies became apparent in its solution: (1) continuation of

Alexander's policy of rapprochement between the Graeco-Macedonian and local aristocracy, and the use of the local traditional forms of social and political organisation; (2) a harsher policy towards the conquered local population, deprived of all rights, and introduction of the polis structure. In their relations with the remote eastern satrapies all the *diadochoi* had to follow the practices established under Alexander and probably going back to the Persian times: the power was vested in the local aristocracy on conditions of vassalage and payment of tribute in money and in kind. Peithon's attempt to interfere in their internal administration ended in failure. Seleucus, who campaigned in the eastern satrapies, merely achieved a recognition of his supreme power and the payment of tribute. As later documents show, Ptolemy Lagos left the socio-political structure of Egypt without any essential changes, adapting it to suit his interests. Seleucus apparently acted in the same way in Babylonia.

Founding new poleis was one of the means of economic and political consolidation of power in the conquered territories. That policy, begun by Alexander, was vigorously continued by the *diadochoi*. The new poleis were founded both as strategic strongholds and as administrative and economic centres. Some of them were laid out on empty lands and settled by newcomers from Greece, Macedonia and other regions; others emerged through voluntary or forcible union of two or several impoverished towns or villages; while still others arose from the reorganisation of deserted Oriental cities where Graeco-Macedonian migrants settled. New poleis appeared throughout the Hellenistic world, but their number, location and mode of origin reflected the historical circumstances and the features of the various regions. In the densely populated and highly advanced areas of Egypt and the Near East, the *diadochoi* founded only isolated poleis at strategically important points (Ptolemais in Upper Egypt, Seleucia on the Tigris, etc.); in northern Greece and Macedonia new harbour towns arose (Demetrias, Thessalonice, Cassandria, Lysimachia). The greatest number of poleis were founded in the coastal regions of Asia Minor and Syria (Antioch on the Orontes, Seleucia Pieria, Apamea, Ptolemais in Coelestria, Smirna, Nicaea, etc.), which was apparently due to the strategic and economic significance of these formerly thinly populated areas.



*The Eastern Mediterranean Region in the 3rd Century B. C.* The tendencies that first evolved during the strife between the *diadochoi* became more apparent in the 3rd century B. C. By the mid-270s, the boundaries of the Hellenistic states were largely fixed, and a new stage in the political history of the eastern Mediterranean and the Near East began. The Seleucids, the Ptolemies and the Antigonids began a long-drawn-out struggle for hegemony over the independent cities and states of Asia Minor, Greece, Coele-syria, and the islands of the Mediterranean and the Aegean. The means employed in that struggle were not only open military conflicts between the rivals but also diplomatic intrigues and clever use of the political and social frictions within the poleis.

In the 3rd century, Ptolemaic Egypt, which became established as an independent state somewhat earlier than the other Hellenistic powers and was therefore economically stronger, had an advantage over its rivals—the Seleucid kingdom and Macedonia.

The interests of Egypt and of the Seleucid empire mainly clashed in southern Syria and Palestine, as possession of these territories brought a vast income from revenue and ensured a dominant role in the trade with Arab tribes. Besides, that region was strategically important both geographically and because of its cedar timber, the main building material for warships and merchant ships alike. The same causes brought Egypt, the Seleucid state and Macedonia into conflict over Asia Minor. But here the aggressive tendencies of the major Hellenistic states brought them into collision not only with one another but also with the evolving local Hellenistic states aspiring to independence. The bone of contention between Egypt and Macedonia was the islands of the Aegean and Greece—industrial producers, consumers of farming products and sources of military reinforcements and skilled manpower. The political and social strife within the Greek poleis offered ample opportunity for the Hellenistic states to interfere in their internal affairs.

The conflict between Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom over Coele-syria began in 274. Not long before that, Egypt lost Cyrenaica; Ptolemy II's half-brother Magas, who ruled there, proclaimed himself king and turned to Antiochus, Seleucus's heir, for help. Our information about the course and outcome of the First Syrian War is still imprecise; most scholars assume that it lasted until 271. As a result of

the war, Ptolemy retained southern Syria and southern Phoenicia and somewhat expanded his possessions in Asia Minor, but Cyrenaica won its independence from Egypt.

Antigonus Gonatas did not take part in that war, as he had to fight over the Macedonian throne with Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who had returned to Greece from his bootless campaigns in southern Italy and Sicily. Antigonus won a victory at Argos (where Pyrrhus fell in battle), re-established his rule over Macedonia, and began to expand his possessions in Greece. The danger of Macedonian conquest caused an upsurge of patriotic feeling in Athens and Sparta. Ptolemy II, anxious to curb Antigonus's expansion in Greece, supported that mood, concluding alliances first with each polis separately and then with Athens, Sparta and all its allies collectively. The Lacedaemonian coalition was headed by Areus, king of Sparta, and the Athenian people's *prostates* were the democratic statesmen Chremonides and Glaukon. The war that soon broke out was called after the first of the *prostates*, who was apparently the initiator of the alliance.

The chronology of the Chremonidean War has not been firmly established; some historians date its beginning to 270-268 B. C., while most point to 266-262. According to Pausanias, Antigonus moved on Athens at the head of his army and fleet, laid waste on Attica and surrounded the city. Despite Athens' loss of the leading position among Greek cities, Macedonian kings desiring to establish their rule over Greece always endeavoured to subdue Athens first—both by force of tradition and because Athens still remained a major centre of trade and industry. The Egyptian fleet, which Ptolemy had sent to succour Athens, lay off Cape Sunion and could not offer any decisive help to Athens, not having any land troops. Concentrating all his forces against the Lacedaemonians, Antigonus defeated them near Corinth and, after a long siege, seized Athens (263/262 B. C.). The Chremonidean War thus increased Antigonus's influence in mainland Greece, while Ptolemy retained his positions in the Aegean and Mediterranean seas and in Asia Minor. The Seleucids were at that time trying to subdue the rebellious Pergamum.

Though he had lost his influence in Greece, Ptolemy II did not give up an active foreign policy in the Aegean and the Sea of Marmora. The kingdoms of

Bithynia and Cappadocia, and the Greek poleis Heraclea and Byzantium saw him as an ally in the fight for independence from the Seleucids. Ptolemy's interference in Bithynia's internal affairs resulted in a fresh conflict with the Seleucids.

Our data on the Second Syrian War are even more scanty than on the First. Historians mention a joint siege of Ephesus by Antiochus and a Rhodian force, a sea battle between the Egyptians and a Rhodian fleet, and the fact that Ptolemy II, in his desire to put an end to the exhausting war, gave his daughter Berenice in marriage to Antiochus, providing her with a fabulous dowry. Egypt sustained considerable territorial losses as a result of that war; including the poleis of Asia Minor, the islands of Samos and Samothrace, the possessions in Pamphylia and Cappadocia, and, temporarily, the Cyclades.

Annexation by Macedonia offered Greek poleis no special economic or political advantages. Besides, the centuries-old traditions of autonomy and autarchy were particularly strong here. Macedonian expansion therefore met with stubborn resistance, especially from the demos, as the stationing of Macedonian garrisons was usually accompanied by the establishment of oligarchic regimes. The continued existence of small poleis independent from the system of Hellenistic monarchies became, however, impossible. Besides, the tendencies of the socio-economic development of the poleis themselves demanded the setting up of broader state unions – federations of poleis. Characteristically, the initiative to found such federations came from the relatively backward areas rather than from Greece's old economic and political centres.

The Aetolian League, which arose out of an alliance of Aetolian tribes, achieved some importance already in the early 3rd century B. C. The Aetolians' authority grew after they had defended Delphi against the Galatians' invasion and became the leaders of the Amphiclonic League. Towards the end of the 3rd century, the Aetolian federation comprised nearly all of central Greece, Elis and Messenia in the Peloponnese, and some Aegean islands. Some poleis joined in voluntarily, while others, like Boeotia, were conquered. The supreme organs of power in the Aetolian League were the assembly of all the League's citizens which was convened annually at Thermum, and the council of representatives from all the poleis. The assembly

decided on war and peace, passed laws affecting the whole League, and elected the high officials – a *strategos*, who was in charge of military affairs and diplomacy, his deputies – a *hipparchos* and a chancellor, and a college of the *apokletoi*. All the poleis of the League retained their internal political system and autonomy and had equal rights and obligations towards the union (with the exception of the poleis that joined in later; these were in a subordinate position); all of them had to contribute military contingents and pay dues that went to the League's treasury. The Aetolian League was mostly hostile towards Macedonia and supported democratic elements in other states.

In 284 B. C., the Achaean League emerged, and by the mid-3rd century it already included such major poleis as Sicyon, Corinth, Megara; in 230 the Achaean League had a membership of some 60 poleis and covered much of the Peloponnese. The members of the Achaean League also retained their political regimes and internal autonomy, they contributed contingents to the League's armed forces and finances to the League treasury. The League had a unified system of weights and measures and minted its coin. Its centre was the city of Aegium. The supreme organ of power were the assemblies of all the citizens of the League – the *synkletos*, where issues of war and peace were considered and the League's officials elected, and the *synodoi*, which handled current affairs. Persons elected on the basis of age and property qualifications played a much greater role in the Achaean League. For instance, Aratus of Sicyon, whose efforts brought that polis into the League, was elected *strategos* 16 times and guided the League's policy for nearly 30 years. Both within the poleis and in the framework of the League power belonged to the richest citizens, and that determined the Achaean League's domestic and foreign policy.

Emerging as an organisation of poleis defending their independence, the Achaean League played a significant role in the opposition to Macedonian expansion on the Peloponnese. A particularly important act was the expelling of the Macedonian garrison from Corinth in 243 and the capture of Acrocorinth – a fortress on a high hill controlling the Isthmus. That operation increased the political authority of the Achaean League, which was joined at that time by several major poleis. It coincided

with the Third Syrian War, and, apparently, that coincidence was not fortuitous: Aratus, the League's *strategos* and initiator of the capture of Acrocorinth, kept up contacts with the Ptolemies and was subsidised by them.

The pretext for the Third Syrian War (246-241 B. C.) was the accession to the throne of Seleucus II, son of Antiochus II by his first wife. Ptolemy III took this as a violation of the rights of Berenice and her son and led his army to assist his sister. There seemed to be no unity in the ruling circles of the Seleucid empire. Some supported Seleucus II and his mother Laodice, while others favoured closer ties with Egypt and backed Berenice's claims. That is the only explanation for the grand reception of Ptolemy III in Seleucia Pieria and in Antioch. But Berenice and her son had apparently been killed not long before the arrival of the Egyptian force at Antioch. Ptolemy III responded to the assassination by a punitive expedition into the country's interior. War was simultaneously waged on the coast of Asia Minor, in the Aegean, and in the inner regions of the Seleucid empire. As a result of his military successes, Ptolemy III took a vast booty back to Egypt, returning to the temples the treasures once taken to Persia by Cambyses. Egypt's former possessions in Asia Minor, including Miletus, Ephesos and the island of Samos, were returned to it; the new acquisitions included Chersonese in Thrace and the island of Thasos. Egypt's possessions in Syria expanded: Seleucia Pieria remained under the Ptolemies' power until the campaigns of Antiochus III.

Ptolemy III's success in the Third Syrian War was apparently due to some extent to the internal instability of the Seleucid empire. C. 250, Diodotus and Euthydemus, the governors of Bactria and Sogdiana, broke with the Seleucid empire, and several years later Bactria, Sogdiana and Margiana formed an independent Graeco-Bactrian kingdom. Almost simultaneously, the governor and the Seleucid garrison in Parthia were destroyed by the local tribes of the Parni-dai led by Arsaces, who founded the new, Parthian dynasty of the Arsacids, which according to the tradition began to rule in 247 B. C.

The balance of political forces in the relations between the states of the Hellenistic world which emerged from the Third Syrian War remained essentially unchanged in the subsequent decades, but at the end of the 3rd century B. C. the situation

altered drastically, and the reason for that change lay in the previous socioeconomic development of the Hellenistic states.

*The Formation of the Socioeconomic and Political Structure of the Hellenistic States.* The most characteristic feature of the economic development of Hellenistic society was the growth of trade and commodity production. Despite the frequent military conflicts, regular sea routes were established between Egypt, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and Macedonia. Trading across the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf as far as India became regular. Trading links between Egypt and the Pontic region, Carthage and Rome came into being. Major trading and industrial centres emerged, such as Alexandria in Egypt, Antioch on the Orontes, Seleucia on the Tigris, Pergamum and others, whose industrial production was largely intended for export. The Seleucids built several poleis along the old caravan routes linking upper satrapies with Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean. The Ptolemies founded several ports on the Red Sea coast. With the appearance of new trading centres in the eastern Mediterranean, the trading routes in the Aegean shifted, the role of Rhodes and Corinth as transit trade ports grew, while the importance of Athens diminished. Money circulation and money operations were intensified by the minting of coin from the precious metals from the treasuries of the Persian kings and temples.

The numerous poleis which emerged in the Orient attracted artisans, traders and other professionals. The Greeks and Macedonians that settled in the East brought with them their customary mode of life, and that increased the number of slaves. The need to supply food for the traders and craftsmen necessitated an increase in the agricultural produce intended for the market. Monetary relations began to spread even in the Egyptian village, the *koma*, undermining the traditional relations and increasing the exploitation of the rural population.

The fact itself of the development of trade indicates a significant growth in the economic potential of the Hellenistic states. Both the volume of handicraft production and its technical level rose. The scope of agricultural production also increased through expansion of the areas under cultivation as well as their more intensive exploitation. Evidence of

this is found in papyri and archaeological excavations at Fayum: land melioration began already under Ptolemy I Soter, and new farming centres emerged at that time. There are no reasons to believe that that phenomenon was exceptional or characteristic of the kingdom of the Ptolemies only.

Economic and technical progress was greatly stimulated by the interaction in the field of material production between Greeks and non-Greeks, between the local population and the newcomers, exchange of experiences and skills in farming and the crafts, as well as exchange of plants for cultivation and scientific knowledge. Settlers from Greece and Asia Minor brought to Syria and Egypt their skills at olive- and vine-growing, and in their turn borrowed from the local population the cultivation of date-palms. Papyri report that attempts were made to acclimatise the Miletan breed of sheep at Fayum. This kind of exchange of breeds and cultivated plants must have occurred before the Hellenistic period, but now the conditions for it became more favourable. It is difficult to identify changes in agricultural implements, but the large-scale irrigation systems in Egypt, mostly built by the local population directed by the Greek "architects", can be seen as a combination of the techniques and experiences of both peoples. One of the irrigation devices used in Egypt was improved by Archimedes (the Archimedean screw or pump).

In the handicrafts, the combination of the techniques and skills of local craftsmen and newcomers (both Greeks and non-Greeks) and increased demand for industrial products resulted in a number of important inventions which gave rise to new types of handicrafts, a narrower specialisation of the craftsmen and the possibility of mass production of some objects.

Already the first decades of the Hellenistic epoch witnessed an intense development of the technique of shipbuilding and navigation, production of military equipment and town-building. Along with the triremes and pentremes which were the navy's main force under Alexander the Great, Athenian, Corinthian and Phoenician shipbuilders began to build on orders from Demetrius Poliorcetes, powerful and swift warships with 13 and 16 banks of oars. Warships with 20 and 30 banks of oars were built at the warfs of Alexandria in the 3rd century, the tendency culminating in the famous tessaraconter—a ship

with 40 banks of oars built on Ptolemy IV's orders; its size staggered the contemporaries' imagination, but it proved little suited for navigation. The tonnage and speed of the merchant navy increased, harbours were better equipped, and piers and lighthouses were built. The Pharos lighthouse in Alexandria, built by Sostratos of Cnidus in 285-280, was the greatest such structure in antiquity.

Continual wars during the strife between the *diadochoi* and later stimulated the development of siege and defence techniques. Such complex machines as battering rams, various types of catapults and *balistai* (throwing arrows and stones), siege towers (*helepolis*), invented already in the 4th century, became standard equipment in the Hellenistic period; their power and variety were increased and construction improved. Simultaneously, fortifications improved, too, as the techniques of town-building developed.

The practice of founding poleis, to which all Hellenistic rulers resorted, created favourable conditions for the development of construction skills and of architecture. New towns were built in accordance with the principles of town-planning worked out already in the 5th century by Hippodamus of Miletus—on the gridiron plan, the streets aligned on the cardinal points where the terrain permitted. The main street, the broadest of all, was adjoined by the agora surrounded on three sides by public buildings and the porticoes of traders; the most important temples and gymnasia were usually erected not far from it; theatres and stadiums were usually built on suitable grounds outside the housing area. The cities were surrounded by defensive walls with gate-and watch-towers; besides, a citadel was built on the highest and strategically most important site. Excavations of Priene and Nicaea in Asia Minor and of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates provide models of the planning of Hellenistic cities. According to antique authors, the plan of Alexandria in Egypt was worked out by the architect Deinocrates of Rhodes. Its two intersecting main streets were 30 metres broad. Water supply, regularity of construction in the housing areas, and drainage were objects of special concern in town building. In the 3rd and 2nd centuries B. C., the type of a rich private residence with a peristyle and painted walls evolved which later spread to the south of Italy. At the same time houses of several storeys intended as flats for the poor appeared in Tyre, Aradus, Alexandria and other cities.

There were technical advances in other crafts, too. A type of mould was invented in metallurgy which permitted the casting of many objects, say bronze statues, from the same mould. The Greeks learnt to use an improved type of a loom that was in use in Egypt and the Near East, and workshops appeared producing figured fabrics (in Alexandria) and gold brocade (in Pergamum). In Egypt, mass production of papyrus was organised, and later, in the 2nd century, of parchment (in Pergamum). Jewelers discovered the amalgamation process, that is, the technique of covering objects with a thin layer of gold from a solution of gold in mercury. The methods of producing mosaic, two-colour cut, engraved and gilded glass were discovered. The artifacts thus produced were regarded as luxury objects, and some of them were real objects of art. Relief pottery became widespread, the ware covered with dark varnish with a metallic sheen, imitating in form and colour more expensive metal vessels (the so-called Megara cups). This ware was mass produced owing to the use of small clichés whose combinations permitted numerous variations in the ornament. Split moulds were now used in terracotta production just as in the casting of bronze statues; this permitted the making of objects of more intricate design in numerous copies. In this way works by artists and craftsmen became objects of mass production intended not only for the very rich but also for citizens of modest means.

Against the background of flourishing new economic centres in the Seleucid empire, Egypt and Asia Minor, the state of the economy in Greece and Macedonia is seen by many researchers as stagnating or even declining. But that is an erroneous view. In these areas, too, new trade and crafts centres—Thessalonice, Cassandria, Philippopolis—arose. The fast ships and siege equipment for Demetrius Poliorcetes were first built at Greek cities and ports, like Corinth and Athens. Shipbuilding and production of military equipment apparently continued to develop in Greece and Macedonia, as in the second half of the 3rd century Macedonian kings had a navy capable of competing with that of the Ptolemies.

The economic development of Greece and Macedonia proceeded, of course, at a slower rate than elsewhere. The reason for that is not only the debilitating wars of the *diadochoi* and the struggle of the Greek poleis against Macedonian domination, or

the migration of the most vigorous and enterprising sections of the population to the Oriental countries, but also a different socio-political structure and a different character of the social processes. At the end of the 4th century B. C. the Greek polis, as a form of socioeconomic and political organisation of antique society, was in a state of deep crisis. The polis was a drag on further economic progress, as the *autarchia* and *autonomia* inherent in it imposed constraints on the expansion and consolidation of the economic links. Neither did it correspond to the needs of socio-political development, for, on the one hand, it did not ensure the reproduction of the civic community as a whole (since its poorest sections inevitably faced the threat of losing civil rights), and on the other, it did not guarantee the external security or the stable domination of that community, torn by inner strife, over slaves and non-citizens.

The historical events of the late 4th and early 3rd centuries led to the establishment of a new form of socio-political organisation—the Hellenistic monarchy combining elements of an Oriental despotic state (the monarchic form of power relying on a regular army and a centralised administration) and some features of the polis structure (cities with rural territory attached to them, retaining their organs of internal self-government largely subordinated, however, to the king). The size of the territory handed over to the polis depended on the king, and so did the economic and political privileges of the poleis; the polis had no right to an independent foreign policy; in most cases the polis organs of self-government were controlled by a royal official, the epistates. The loss of independence in foreign policy by the polis was compensated for by greater security, social stability and stable economic links with the other parts of the state. In its turn, the city population became the necessary social basis of royal power, a source of contingents for the army and the administration.

Agrarian relations on the polis territory followed the usual pattern: the citizens owned their allotments, the city, the lands that were not divided between the citizens. A complication arose here: lands could be handed over to the polis together with villages whose inhabitants did not become citizens of the polis but continued to own their allotments, paying tribute to the city or the private persons that had received these lands from the king and

later given them to the city. All land that was not divided between cities belonged to the king. According to the Revenue Laws of Ptolemy II Philadelphus and some other Egyptian papyri, royal land fell into two categories: royal land proper and "conceded" lands. The latter included temple lands, lands given away to members of his retinue, and lands given in small allotments (*kleroi*) to the warriors, *kleruchoi* or *katoikoi*, as reward for service. There might be villages on all these categories of land, whose inhabitants continued to own their hereditary allotments, paying tribute or taxes.

This complexity of agrarian relations conditioned the multi-layer social structure of the Hellenistic states. The royal house with its court staff, the higher military and civil officials, the more prosperous citizens and high priests constituted the upper stratum of the land- and slave-owning aristocracy. Their well-being was based on lands (belonging to the city or received as gifts from the king), profitable offices, trade, farming of the taxes (*telonia*) and usury.

The middle classes were more numerous; here belonged urban traders and craftsmen, the royal administrative personnel, farmers, *kleruchoi* and *katoikoi*, local priests, professionals (architects, physicians, philosophers, artists and sculptors, etc.). The upper and the middle strata, with all the differences in the size of their wealth and direction of their interests, constituted the ruling class which was termed in Egyptian papyri "Hellenes" not so much from the ethnic membership of the individuals as their social position, which set them apart from all the "non-Hellenes", i. e., the indigent urban and rural population or *laoi* (the people, the mob).

The *laoi* were mostly dependent or semi-dependent peasants who tilled the lands of the king, the aristocrats and the citizens as lease-holders or traditional tenants. Here also belonged *hypoteleis*—the workers of the royal monopolies (i. e., the workshops in those industries which were the state's monopoly). All of them were considered to be personally free but they could only live and work in those residential areas and workshops where they were registered. Only slaves stood lower on the social ladder.

Graeco-Macedonian conquests, the wars of the *diadochoi*, the spreading of the polis structure—all of this gave a strong impetus to the development of slave-owning relations in their classic antique form,

though the more primitive forms (enslavement for debts, self-selling, etc.) continued to exist. Presumably slave labour in Hellenistic cities (mostly in the household and probably in the urban handicrafts) played no less a role than in the Greek poleis. On the whole, however, slave labour in agriculture, particularly on royal lands, could not, to any considerable extent, oust the labour of the local population—"king's peasants" in Egypt, "king's people" in the Seleucid empire—whose exploitation was just as profitable. On large estates received by aristocrats from the king, slaves performed administrative functions or did unskilled work. However, the growing role of slave-owning in the overall system of socioeconomic relations entailed a strengthening of non-economic forms of coercion of the rural population and disintegration of forms of communal organisation, which had ensured the economic stability and independence of small peasant holdings.

The principal form of economic organisation in Egyptian agriculture was the petty holdings of "king's" or "state" peasants. The quantity of land suitable for cultivation was restricted to the area irrigated by the Nile's floods or artificially. Beyond that narrow strip lay a stony desert hardly suitable even for grazing. Cultivation was impossible without irrigation; the construction of canals and dams, their repairs and maintenance demanded joint and coordinated efforts of all the villagers—dwellers of a *koma*—and, consequently, of definite forms of organisation of that labour. Commodity-money relations were but poorly developed, and the *koma*'s demand for industrial products was mostly met by local craftsmen. All this would seem to offer the necessary conditions for the stable existence of the rural community, but Hellenistic documents indicate only traces of community organisation in the Egyptian *koma*.

One of the principal elements of the community structure—a combination of communal ownership of land and the commoners' private ownership of land allotments—was transformed in Hellenistic Egypt into ownership of the *koma*'s lands by the crown and the renting of separate plots by the commoners. The reservation must be made that this was only the legal form of the agrarian relations brought by the Graeco-Macedonian conquest. In actual fact, however, Egyptian peasants continued to own their allotments, they could hand them down to their heirs,



divide them between joint owners, or give them away as dowry. The king could only take away the allotments from their owners if they failed to pay taxes. Each *koma* had a territory traditionally attached to it, but this might include, besides allotments of the king's peasants, estates belonging to temples or *kleruchoi*, and estates given to the aristocracy by the king. Grazing lands and those which for some reason became barren and unprofitable and were abandoned by their owners were in the hands of the local administration. Formally, these lands were similar to community lands not divided among the commoners, but their use was determined by the interests of the treasury rather than the needs of the *koma*'s people.

In the 2nd century B. C., when lands were abandoned on an alarming scale and the royal treasury suffered heavy losses, the king ordered the local authorities to forcibly distribute abandoned lots among villagers for cultivation, or rather for collecting taxes. Again, on the formal side, this forcible distribution of land, or *epibole*, was similar to the division of communal land among commoners, while in actual fact—in its purpose and significance for the peasants of the *komas*—it was a form of exploitation.

Papyri mention the common "king's threshing-floor", where all villagers threshed their wheat. This practice must have arisen within the community in remote antiquity because of scarcity of unflooded land. That custom, too, was used by the state in its own interests: the threshing was done under the supervision of a king's official, and no one could take away their grain until they had paid the taxes.

Another important element of the communal structure, the organs of self-government, also went through considerable changes. The names of the offices involved in the life of a *koma*, preserved in Hellenistic papyri, possibly originated in the communal organisation, but under the Ptolemies they no longer denoted elected officials but, in most cases, representatives of the local royal administration who were remunerated, in one form or another, by the king's treasury. The main concern of the *koma* administration was ensuring the flow of revenue to the royal treasury; for this purpose, the necessary irrigation work was done, and land cultivation, sowing and harvesting were controlled. The purpose, motives and forms of the activity of officials had thus changed.

Hellenistic papyri do not mention any assemblies of *koma* peasants (or even "the king's peasants"). There are some data on their collective actions, though—e. g., mass *anachoresis* or taking refuge in temples in protest against pressure from the royal administration. One of the inscriptions found on the territory of Fayum contains, however, the traditional formula concerning the decision of a meeting of the *kometai* to set up a gymnasium in their *koma*.

Having transformed the organs of the *koma* self-government into an administrative mechanism, the state made obligatory the commoners' former responsibilities before the community: the peasants were obliged to properly cultivate their plots of land in order to pay taxes regularly; the maintenance and extension of the irrigation network became an obligatory "liturgy" or duty; the commoner's bond with the community changed into his customary or legal duty to toil where he was born and at the trade he was born into.

During the Hellenistic period, the *koma*'s population was not uniform either ethnically or socially. Besides "kings' peasants", military colonists (*katoikoi*, *kleruchoi*, *machimoi*), citizens of poleis, officials, farmers, priests, craftsmen, traders, day-labourers, and slaves lived in the *komas* permanently or temporarily. There were Egyptians, Greeks, Jews, Syrians, and tribesmen from adjacent territories among them. In the course of time, the ethnic differences were gradually erased, whereas the differences in the economic and legal position increased, giving rise to conflicts between different social groups. All these factors—state interference, the influx of migrants, and social differentiation within the *koma*—weakened the links within the community and changed the nature of its institutions.

Thus the socio-political structure of the Hellenistic states took shape during the 3rd century with a system of management of the state or crown economy; the central and local military, administrative, financial, and legal apparatus; a system of taxation, farming and monopolies; relations between cities and temples on the one hand and the royal administration on the other; the social stratification of society and the corresponding legislation defining the privileges of some strata and the obligations of others. The social conflicts inherent in that structure also became apparent.

*Aggravation of Social Conflicts in the Hellenistic States in the Late 3rd-Early 2nd Centuries B. C.* The study of the social structure of the eastern Hellenistic states shows that the main burden of maintaining the state apparatus was borne by the rural population. The cities were in a more favourable position, which must have been one of the main causes of their rapid growth and efflorescence.

The social development in Greece and Macedonia took a different route. Macedonia also evolved as a Hellenistic state combining the elements of monarchy and of polis structure. But, although the land possessions of the Macedonian kings were relatively great, there were no masses of dependent rural population (with the possible exception of the Thracians) that could be exploited to provide the cost of maintaining the administration personnel and large sections of the ruling class. The burden of maintaining the army and building warships was equally carried by the urban and rural population. Differences between Greeks and Macedonians, rural and city dwellers were determined by their economic position, the principal class division being between free men and slaves. The principal trend in the development of the economy was towards further spreading of slave-owning relations.

In Greece, the Hellenistic epoch did not bring any essential changes in the socioeconomic system as it existed at the end of the 4th century B. C. The most tangible change was the migration of the population (mostly young and mature warriors, artisans, and traders) eastwards, to the Near East and Egypt. This should have had a dampening effect on the social conflicts within the poleis. But the nearly continual devastating wars of the *diadochoi*, the devaluation of money due to the influx of gold and silver from Asia and the corresponding rise in the price of consumer goods ruined the indigent and middle strata of the population. The problem of overcoming the economic isolation of the poleis remained unsolved. Attempts were made to resolve that issue in the framework of confederacies (cf., e. g., the introduction of a unified system of weights and measures and minting of coin in the Achaean League). In the poleis dominated by Macedonia, oligarchic or tyrannical regimes were set up, the freedom of international relations was restricted, and Macedonian garrisons were stationed at strategically important points.

In the 3rd century social differentiation in all Greek poleis increased. Indigent citizens continued to lose their land and incur debts while riches and lands accumulated in the hands of the polis aristocracy. In the mid-3rd century B. C., these processes were most acute in Sparta, where most Spartans had virtually lost their land allotments. The need for social reform made the Spartan king Agis IV (245-241 B. C.) propose a cancellation of debts and a redistribution of land, to increase the number of citizens. These reforms, framed as a restoration of the laws of Lycurgus, were fiercely resisted by the ephorate and the aristocracy. Agis fell a victim of that conflict, but the social situation in Sparta remained tense. Several years later, king Cleomenes III (235-222) proposed the same reforms. Remembering Agis's fate, Cleomenes began by consolidating his positions through successful operations in the war against the Achaean League that started in 228. Enlisting the support of the army, he liquidated the ephorate, banished the richest citizens from Sparta, and then cancelled debts and redistributed land, increasing the number of citizens by 4,000. The events in Sparta incited unrest throughout Greece. Mantinea left the Achaean League and joined Cleomenes; disturbances began in other Peloponnesian cities. The war with the Achaean League flared up again, Cleomenes occupied several cities, and Corinth went over to his side. Frightened by these developments, the oligarchic leadership of the Achaean League appealed for help to Antigonos III Doson, king of Macedonia. The balance of forces now went against Sparta. Cleomenes then let some 6,000 helots buy their freedom, including 2,000 of them in his army. But in the battle near Sellasia in 222 B. C. the united forces of the Macedonians and the Achaeans destroyed the Spartan army, Cleomenes fled to Egypt, a Macedonian garrison was stationed at Sparta, and Cleomenes's reforms were annulled. Antigonos III founded the Hellenic League under Macedonia's hegemony, which included the Achaean League, Sparta and other Greek poleis, with the exception of the Aetolian League and Athens.

Cleomenes's defeat could not stop the growth of social movements. Already in 219, Chilo again tried to eliminate the ephorate in Sparta and to implement a redistribution of property; in 215, the oligarchs were driven out of Messenia, and a redistri-

bution of land was carried out; in 210, the tyrant Machanidas seized power in Sparta; after his death in the war with the Achaean League, the Spartan state was headed by the tyrant Nabis (206-192), who implemented even more radical reforms, redistributing the lands and property of the aristocracy, freeing helots and giving land to the *perioikoi*. In 205, an attempt to cancel debts was made in Aetolia.

The growing acuteness of the social struggles compelled the aristocracy of the Greek poleis to seek support from a stronger state authority, which was favourable to the expansion of Macedonian influence. However, an attempt to subdue the Aetolian League during the so-called War of the Allies (220-217) proved unsuccessful. Then Philip V, intending to consolidate his positions in the Adriatic, formed an alliance with Hannibal (215 B.C.) and dislodged the Romans from their possessions in Illyria, acquired in 229. That was the beginning of Philip's first war against Rome (215-205) which was, in fact, Philip's war against his Greek opponents which joined Rome-Aetolia, Sparta and Pergamum—and ended favourably for Macedonia. The last years of the 3rd century witnessed the peak of Macedonia's political and economic power. Her rise was facilitated by the overall political situation in the eastern Mediterranean.

Towards the end of the 3rd century B.C., internal conflicts in the socioeconomic structure of the Hellenistic states became apparent, particularly in the state economy in Egypt. The entire organisation of the royal estates was aimed at extracting the greatest profit from lands, mines and workshops. As Egyptian papyri clearly show, the system of taxes and tributes, worked out in great detail, swallowed most of the harvest, exhausting the economic potential of the small holdings. The expanding royal administration, as well as farmers and traders, added to the exploitation of the local population. One of the more common forms of protest against oppression was *anachoresis*, sometimes on a mass scale, and, in the case of slaves, running away from their masters. Later, the popular masses resorted to more active forms of struggle. Thus it was civil unrest in Egypt that made Ptolemy III Euergetes hurriedly conclude peace during the Third Syrian War. In the Seleucid empire, the secession of Parthia and Bactria was also brought about by an uprising of the local population against increased social oppression.

The social situation in Egypt became especially tense in the last decades of the 3rd century. In 219, the war with the Seleucids over Coele Syria flared up again. One of the first acts in that war was the capture in 219 of Seleucia by Antiochus III through suborning the commanders of the Egyptian garrison which defended it. In 218 Antiochus invaded Coele Syria and, conquering one city after another by bribery or siege, approached the borders of Egypt. The decisive battle between the armies of Ptolemy IV and Antiochus III took place in 217 near Raphia. The forces of the two sides were well matched, and, according to Polybius, Ptolemy won the victory only due to the success of his Egyptian phalanxes. Antiochus retreated, and many cities of Coele Syria reverted to Ptolemy. But the latter did not have sufficient strength to pursue the enemy and recapture his possessions in Syria; besides, soon after the battle near Raphia, troubles apparently broke out in Egypt; he was compelled to begin peace negotiations and accept Antiochus's conditions, retaining only part of Coele Syria adjoining the borders of Egypt.

The unsuccessful war and the hardships it brought caused unrest among the masses, first in Lower Egypt and then throughout the country. The troubles apparently began among Egyptian warriors and then spread to the rural population. The thoroughly Hellenised areas of Lower Egypt were fairly quickly pacified by the government of Ptolemy IV, whereas the unrest that had started in the south of Egypt had grown into a broad popular movement by 206 B.C. Thebes seceded from the Ptolemies, and local dynasts ruled there for more than two decades. Their names, Anhmachis and Armachis, are mentioned in private documents from those times. Ptolemais remained the Ptolemies' only stronghold in Upper Egypt.

Some works concerned with that period stressed the "nationalist" anti-Hellenic aspects of the movement. It should be borne in mind, however, that by the end of the 3rd century the term "Hellenes" had come to denote a social rather than ethnic concept. During the Greeks' more than a century-long domination of Egypt, significant changes occurred in the population's social and ethnic structure. In Alexandria and Ptolemais, Graeco-Macedonians were more or less able to maintain their ethnic isolation and retain the polis customs and laws, whereas

in the *chora* mixed marriages became quite common. Judging from testaments from the 3rd century B. C., *cleruchoi* often lived with their slave- or freed-women, Egyptian or Syrian, and later adopted the offspring. The new generation learnt the local customs and beliefs from their mothers and at the same time could be educated in the Greek style at gymnasiums which existed at Alexandria, Naucratis, Ptolemais, and, towards the end of the 3rd century, in the centre of nomes and even some *komas* of Fayum.

In the south of Egypt, Greek colonisation was much less thoroughgoing than in the Delta and Fayum, and the old pre-Ptolemaic traditions were more stable. But here, too, the local aristocrats that had survived the Graeco-Macedonian conquest and now strove to retain their positions in the temples and the administration increasingly became Hellenised, learning Greek and absorbing Greek culture – the necessary prerequisites of membership in the privileged strata. For this reason, the movement in Thebes may have been to some extent a protest against foreign oppression, but the sources clearly show its social colouring. Some Egyptian priests may have joined the rebels (the temple of Horus at Edfu was in the rebels' hands for twenty years), but on the whole the priesthood was loyal to the ruling dynasty, and many temples suffered from the "impious" and the "apostates".

Against the background of endless uprisings in the south of the country, the struggle in the court circles never subsided either. With the accession to the throne of the six-year-old Ptolemy V in 204, a vicious fight for the regency broke out among the various groups of the court aristocracy. Relying mostly on mercenaries, they also often resorted in their strife to such a terrible weapon as the anger of the Alexandrian mob.

The end of the 3rd and beginning of the 2nd centuries B. C. can be viewed as a landmark in the history of the Hellenistic world. In the previous period, the contacts between the countries of the eastern and western Mediterranean were mostly economic and cultural, while political (primarily diplomatic) links were very irregular; in the last decades of the 3rd century, however, there was a tendency towards a more active political interaction, as shown by the alliance between Philip V and Hannibal during the Second Punic War and the so-called First Macedonian War. The balance of forces within the Hel-

lenistic world changed, too. Small Hellenistic states like Pergamum, Rhodes, Cappadocia and Pontus began to play an increasing role in the international relations, while the political influence of the Ptolemaic kingdom, which was weakened by the continual popular movements and acute political strife within the ruling circles, decreased.

In the last years of the 3rd century, taking advantage of the internal instability of Egypt, Philip V and Antiochus III seized the Ptolemies' external possessions. Macedonia now controlled all the poleis that had formerly belonged to the Ptolemies on the Hellespont, in Asia Minor and on the Aegean, while Antiochus occupied Phoenicia and Coelestria after his victory at Panion (200 B. C.). Macedonia's expansion infringed upon the interests of Rhodes and Pergamum; this caused a war (201 B. C.), in which Philip V began to gain the upper hand; Rhodes and Pergamum then turned for help to the Romans. This was a convenient pretext for Rome to begin a war against Macedonia, as after the successful conclusion of the Second Punic War Rome had subdued all western Mediterranean and shifted the direction of its aggressive intentions east. In this way the conflict between the Hellenistic states developed into the Second Macedonian War (200-197 B. C.).

The Romans' demagogic campaign, in which the traditional slogan of "freedom" for the Greek poleis figured prominently, attracted the Aetolian and Achaean Leagues to their side; this was especially true of the propertied strata, which saw Rome as a force capable of protecting their interests without imposing the monarchic form of rule, so odious to the demos. After the defeat near Cynoscephalae Philip V had to conclude a peace according to which Macedonia lost all its possessions in Asia Minor, the Aegean, and Greece. Having solemnly declared freedom for the Greek poleis during the Isthmian Games in 196, Rome went on to disregard completely the interests of its former allies, setting state borders, stationing its garrisons in Corinth, Demetrius and in Chalcidice, and interfering in the poleis' internal affairs. The Romans robbed Greece of immense numbers of bronze and marble statues, and of vast quantities of gold and silver in the shape of objects of art, bullion, bars, and coins. The "liberation" of Greece was in fact the first step in the spreading of Roman domination in the eastern

Mediterranean and the beginning of a new stage in the history of the Hellenistic world.

Macedonia's defeat in the war against Rome and internal conflicts in Egypt created a favourable situation for the growth of the political might of the Seleucid kingdom. Its rise began with Antiochus III's eastern campaign in 212-204 B. C., which partly followed Alexander the Great's route. In the course of the campaign, Antiochus III subdued Sophene and Greater Armenia, made the Parthian king Arsaces II and the king of Bactria Euthydemus recognise their allegiance to the Seleucids, and renewed friendly relations with the local rulers of north-western India, receiving from them gifts of elephants and food supplies. Having consolidated his positions in the east and annexed Coele Syria after the battle of Panion in 200 B. C., Antiochus seized, during Philip V's war with Rome, the cities of Cilicia, Lycia and Caria, which had previously belonged to the Ptolemies, and then began to reduce the poleis of Asia Minor and Thrace liberated by Rome from Macedonian rule. Foreseeing an inevitable conflict with Rome, he settled his relations with his neighbours in Asia Minor and tried to win allies in Greece, but only Aetolia and Boeotia joined him.

The war with Rome, which began in 192 on Greek territory, ended in a defeat of Antiochus's army at Magnesia at Sipylus in Asia Minor (190 B. C.), as a result of which he had to renounce all Seleucid claims in Europe and north of Mt. Taurus in Asia Minor. For diplomatic reasons, the Romans handed these territories over to their allies, Rhodes and Pergamum. Antiochus's defeat stirred separatist movements within the kingdom: recently subdued Greater Armenia and Sophene seceded, and unrest in the eastern provinces renewed. The victory of the Romans and their allies over the greatest of the Hellenistic states, the Seleucid kingdom, radically changed the political situation. Now none of the Hellenistic states could claim hegemony over the eastern Mediterranean. The threat of further Roman expansion became very real, but conflicts between Hellenistic states ruled out any chance of their joining forces.

*The Hellenistic World and Rome.* The subsequent political history of the Hellenistic world was one of

gradual subjugation of one country after another by Rome. The premises of the process lay, on the one hand, in the demands of the economic development of antique society as a whole, including the Hellenistic states, for the establishment of closer and more stable economic links between the western and the eastern Mediterranean, and on the other, in the external conflicts and internal socio-political instability of the Hellenistic states. The unification of the western Mediterranean under Roman power introduced significant changes in the traditional trading links between Greece and Sicily and other western Greek colonies, and in the links, consolidated in the 3rd century, between Egypt and Syria, on the one hand, and North Africa and Italy, on the other. The trading links and economic centres shifted again, the Romans continued their drive east, and the eastern economic centres adapted to the new situation. The Roman military and economic expansion was accompanied by an intense development of slave-owning relations in Italy and in the conquered lands.

All these developments affected the internal situation in the Hellenistic states. Those groups of the aristocracy, mostly urban, which were interested in the expansion of commodity production, trade and slave-owning, more and more came into conflict with the strata of Hellenistic society linked with the royal administrative apparatus and temples and deriving their income mostly from traditional forms of exploitation of the rural population. These clashes of interest manifested themselves in palace coups, fierce dynastic wars, uprisings in the cities, and the persistent attempts by the poleis to win complete independence from royal authority. The strife within the ruling class was aggravated by the struggle of the popular masses in the *chora*, *komas* and the cities against the tax burden, usury and enslavement, which sometimes developed into virtual civil wars that exhausted the economy and the states' military potential.

Private ownership of lands increased during the 2nd century. Land was acquired in various ways, but mostly through direct purchasing of escheated, abandoned or confiscated allotments. The lands of temples and *kleruchoi* gradually passed into private hands. The sale, resale, division and ceding of land, dowry settlements and bequests of privately owned land are recorded in numerous Egyptian papyri.

Despite the diversity of these deeds, they show a tendency towards concentrating privately owned land in the hands of the more privileged individuals in the royal administration in the nomes and toparchies, of garrison officers, the higher echelons of the *kleruchoi* (*katoikoi*) and priests, rich farmers, traders and craftsmen from nome centres, and well-to-do peasants who usually held administrative posts in the *komas*. There is no evidence, however, of the formation of large estates. Even the lands of major owners were always divided into small lots for renting out.

Of the settlers from Greece, the Aegean islands, Asia Minor and other Greek areas who came to Egypt at the end of the 4th and first half of the 3rd centuries, some got richer, profiting from trade, farming, and official or priestly posts, while others failed to retain their membership in the ruling class, becoming common craftsmen and peasants, part of the *laoi*. Towards the end of the 3rd century the living conditions of the *laoi* deteriorated so much that the government of Ptolemy V had to cancel tax arrears and reduce taxes, but life remained very hard in the 2nd century as well. The burden of taxes and tributes was aggravated by the abuses of the local aristocracy. Complaints about officials' abuses and oppression on the part of rich and influential people poured into the king's and *strategoi*'s offices, but the higher royal administrators were already unable to take any effective measures against these abuses.

The court had to reckon with the united and economically strong body of the local military, bureaucratic and priestly aristocracy, on which the income of the royal court and the higher royal administration largely depended, as did supplies of foodstuffs and raw materials to Alexandria. Towards the end of the 3rd century B. C., the local aristocracy itself apparently realised its economic and political importance and began to actively interfere in the court intrigues at Alexandria.

Under the first Ptolemies, the aims of the court aristocracy, which occupied the most important military and bureaucratic posts, and of Alexandria's rich traders and owners of workshops more or less coincided, as both were interested in getting maximum income (in the shape of grain, raw materials, and money) from the Egyptian *chora* and in conducting an active foreign policy, which extended the sphere of Alexandria's trade and brought new

honours and riches to the courtiers. By the beginning of the 2nd century B. C., the situation had changed. The interests of large sections of the court aristocracy which headed the administrative mechanism became increasingly interwoven with those of the higher nobles of the nomes, who wanted to increase their incomes by cutting expenditure on foreign policy ventures, the maintenance of a powerful navy and large contingents of mercenaries. Already in the last decades of the 3rd century B. C., the first clash occurred between these court circles and Alexandria's rich traders and manufacturers over Ptolemy V's regency. Against the background of court strife, the role of mercenaries stationed in Alexandria and of their commanders grew.

The self-seeking officialdom exempt from all control or punishment, beginning with the lowest officials and ending with the *strategoi*, undermined the system of the state economy from within. The local administration, rigorously organised and, under the first Ptolemies, entirely dependent on central authority, became an uncontrolled independent force completely preoccupied with personal enrichment. The government had to issue special decrees to protect peasants and craftsmen connected with the royal estate against their greed, and to get its share of the income.

But the decrees could only temporarily slow down the restructuring of socioeconomic relations. Corporate ownership of land, of which the most prominent feature was the preponderance of crown land providing income accumulated in the state treasury and then distributed among the courtiers, officials, priests and the army in the form of upkeep, salary or gifts, was giving way to private ownership of land and of the income yielded by this land, the state economy being reduced to a size sufficient only for the maintenance of the royal court, mercenaries and the state mechanism in the narrow sense.

Towards the end of the 2nd century, the dynastic strife in Egypt increasingly became interwoven with that in the Seleucid kingdom, and relations with Rome assumed ever greater importance. Roman diplomacy played a considerable role in fanning the dynastic conflicts within and among the Hellenistic states.

Roman diplomacy was particularly effective in the conquest of Macedonia and the states of Asia Minor. On the eve of the Third Macedonian War



(171-168), Rome achieved an almost complete isolation of Macedonia. Despite the attempts of the Macedonian king Perseus to attract the Greek poleis to his side through democratic reforms (he announced cancellation of state debts and the return of exiles), he was joined by Epirus and Illyria only. After the defeat of the Macedonian army near Pydna, the Romans divided Macedonia into four isolated districts and prohibited exploitation of mines, salt-works, export of timber, purchase of real estate, and marriages between the inhabitants of different districts. In Epirus, the Romans destroyed most of the cities and sold more than 150,000 people into slavery; in Greece, they revised the boundaries between the poleis.

While Rome was busy conquering Macedonia, the conflict between Egypt and the Seleucids over Coelestria flared up again. By that time, the Seleucid kingdom had recovered from the damage done by the war with Rome and the payment of indemnity, and Antiochus IV again tried to increase the territory of his kingdom. In 170, and later in 168, he campaigned successfully in Egypt, capturing Memphis and besieging Alexandria, but Roman interference compelled him to give up his conquests. Additional taxes imposed in connection with preparations for a war with Egypt caused an uprising in Jerusalem. Antiochus crushed the rebellion, built the Acra fortress in Jerusalem and left a garrison there. Power in Judea was handed over to the "Hellenists"—that part of priestly aristocracy which was interested in closer ties between Judea and the Seleucids. Judaism was banned, and the cults of Greek gods were introduced. These measures caused a new uprising in Judea (in 166), which developed into a popular war against Seleucid domination. In 164, the insurgents led by Judas Maccabaeus captured Jerusalem and besieged the Acra. Judas Maccabaeus adopted the title of high priest, distributed priestly offices regardless of nobility of birth, and confiscated the property of the Hellenists. In 160, Demetrius I routed Judas Maccabaeus and stationed his garrisons in Judean cities, but the Jews did not cease to fight.

After Antiochus's campaigns, popular movements began again in Egypt—in the nomes of Middle Egypt, headed by Dionysius Petosarapis (suppressed in 165), and in Panopolis. Simultaneously, acute dynastic strife began, which lasted, with brief inter-

ruptions, for more than a hundred years. The economic situation in the Egyptian *chora* was very grave. Considerable tracts of land lay fallow, and the government had to introduce compulsory rentals to make people till these lands. The greater part of the *laoi* were destitute even in the eyes of the royal administration. The official and legal documents of the end of the 2nd century point to anarchy and abuses of power in Egypt during the dynastic wars. *Anachoresis*, refusal to pay debts, seizure of other people's lands, vineyards, houses and property, appropriation of temple and state incomes by private individuals and enslavement of free people occurred on a mass scale. Records of economic activity, petitions, royal decrees (the so-called "decrees of *philanthropia*" published in times of reconciliation between the factions) point to decline in the state economy, decrease of cultivated areas of land, disintegration of the royal monopoly on the crafts and trade, devaluation of money, abuses of officials in charge of collecting taxes and customs. The officials' abuses gave rise to the phenomenon of "protection". More or less well-to-do peasants, craftsmen, traders and farmers enlisted the support of influential persons in order to dodge payments of taxes or other duties to the state; on the other hand, sometimes whole *komas* appealed to higher officials to protect themselves against the abuses of the lower officials and tax farmers.

Social struggles also grew more acute in the Balkan peninsula where they took the form of an anti-Roman movement. The reprisals against Macedonia and Epirus and crude interference in the internal affairs of the Greek poleis gave rise to open rebellions against Roman domination—in Macedonia (in 149-148) and the Achaean League (146), suppressed with customary Roman ruthlessness. Macedonia was declared a Roman province, all leagues of Greek poleis were dissolved, and oligarchies were established everywhere. The population was sold in great numbers into slavery outside the country, and Hellas was impoverished, depopulated and generally in a state of desolation. Rhodes suffered, too, for its neutrality during the Third Macedonian War. The Romans deprived it of territories in Caria and Lycia received after the defeat of Antiochus III, and declared Delos a free port, which made that small island a major centre of transit trade and slave-market, undermining Rhodes' trade importance.

Having subdued Greece and Macedonia, Rome

began an offensive against the states of Asia Minor. By spurring conflicts between Pergamum and its neighbours, the Romans exhausted their military strength. At the same time Roman traders and usurers penetrated the economic systems of the states of Asia Minor, increasingly subordinating the domestic and foreign policy of those states to the interests of Rome. Pergamum's position was worst; the social situation there was so tense that king Attalus III (139-133), despairing of the stability of the existing regime, bequeathed his kingdom to Rome. But neither that act nor the reform which the aristocracy endeavoured to carry out after his death could prevent a popular movement against the Romans and the local nobles which enveloped the whole country. For more than three years (132-129), the insurgent peasants, slaves and the underprivileged urban population led by Aristonicus stubbornly resisted the Romans. After the suppression of the uprising, Pergamum was erected into a Roman province under the name of Asia.

The situation in the Seleucid empire grew more and more unstable. Following Judea, the eastern satrapies also showed separatist tendencies, leaning towards Parthia. The attempt of Antiochus VII Sidetes (138-129 B.C.) to restore the unity of the empire ended in his complete failure and death. That was followed by the secession of Babylonia, Persia and Media, which fell under the sway of Parthia or of independent dynasts. Early in the 1st century B.C., Commagene and Judea became independent. The aggravation of the domestic strife in the Seleucid kingdom and the separatist tendencies in its provinces stemmed from the differences between its eastern and the western regions. The western provinces, profoundly Hellenised (with the exception of Judea) gravitated towards economic links with the Mediterranean, whereas the eastern satrapies were more closely linked with caravan-route trading, economic development of the Caspian and Central Asian regions and trading across the Persian Gulf. Their Hellenisation was fairly superficial: even those cities which were most Hellenistic in their appearance and political organisation largely retained their traditional social structure and ideology. Parthian rule apparently offered them greater economic and political advantages than that of the Seleucids, whose empire was in the grip of an acute socio-political crisis.

That crisis expressed itself in a bitter dynastic strife accompanied by military clashes, urban rebellions, and bloody massacres of opponents. Twelve pretenders succeeded one another on the throne in just 35 years, and sometimes two or three kings ruled simultaneously; the pretenders relied on rival groups of the aristocracy. The territory of the Seleucid kingdom kept shrinking until it included only the lands of Syria proper, Phoenicia, Coelesyria and part of Cilicia. Major cities strove for autonomy or even independence (cf. the tyrannies in Byblos, Tyre, Sidon, etc.). Between 83 and 69, most Syria fell under the rule of Tigranes, king of Armenia. In 64, the Seleucid kingdom was annexed by Rome as the province of Syria. A year later, Judea, where fierce social and dynastic conflicts were in progress, was also added to the Roman state.

In the 1st century B.C., Roman aggression was most stubbornly resisted by the Pontic kingdom, which under Mithridates VI Eupator extended its rule over almost the whole of the Black Sea coast. In 89, Mithridates began a war with Rome, and his act was enthusiastically supported by the masses in Asia Minor and Greece. Hatred for the Romans, who shamelessly plundered the territories under their sway, was so great that at a call from Mithridates, all Romans in Asia Minor were massacred on the same day. In 88, he occupied almost the whole of Greece without much difficulty. But Mithridates's success was shortlived. His advent brought no significant improvement in the life of the Greek poleis; the Romans inflicted several defeats on the less disciplined Pontic army, and the social measures later implemented by Mithridates—cancellation of debts, redistribution of land, and the granting of citizenship to the metics and slaves—cost him the support of the well-to-do citizens. In 85, Mithridates had to admit defeat and give up his conquests. On two more occasions, in 83-81 and 73-63, he tried to stop the Roman drive into Asia Minor, relying on the anti-Roman mood of the masses, but the alignment of the social forces and the tendencies of historical development determined the defeat of the Pontic king.

Early in the 1st century B.C., Roman possessions extended already as far as the borders of Egypt. In 96, Cyrenaica, which had seceded from Egypt two decades before, fell under Roman sway. The Ptolemaic kingdom was still shaken by dynastic strife and

popular movements. C. 88, a mass uprising flared up in the Thebes region, and it was suppressed only three years later by Ptolemy IX, who destroyed Thebes, the hotbed of the rebellion. In the next 15 years, there was also unrest in the nomes of Middle Egypt—in Hermopolis and, twice, in Heracleopolis. Although the Roman Senate debated more than once the annexation of Egypt, the internal and external situation did not permit Rome to begin an open war against this state, comparatively strong and virtually inaccessible in strategic terms. Only in 48 B. C., as he pursued Pompey, did Caesar lead his troops into Alexandria. After eight months of hard fighting with the Egyptians, mostly Alexandrians, he too merely included Egypt in the Roman sphere of influence as an allied kingdom. Only two decades later, Alexandria, that major centre of handicrafts, science and art, probably the most important port on the Mediterranean of those times, and the capital of one of the richest countries, reconciled itself to the inevitability of Roman domination. In 30 B. C., after his victory over Antony, Octavian subdued Egypt almost without resistance. The last Hellenistic state fell.

As a political system, the Hellenistic world was swallowed up by the Roman empire, but elements of the socio-political structure which took shape in the Hellenistic epoch made a great impact on the eastern Mediterranean's later history, largely determining its specific features. First of all, a new step in the development of productive forces was made during the Hellenistic epoch. The area of cultivated land was significantly expanded, irrigation systems were extended and improved, and the mining of mineral deposits became more intense. Noticeable progress was achieved in some handicrafts, particularly in construction techniques and production of luxury goods. A number of new cities, major centres of trade and industry, emerged; some of them have survived from the Hellenistic epoch to this day (cf., e. g., Alexandria in Egypt, Laodicea (modern Latakia) in Syria, Thessalonice (modern Salonika) in Greece, etc. Trading and navigation intensified; new caravan and sea routes appeared, and old ones functioned more regularly. There was a distinct tendency towards a unification of the monetary system within definite regions.

A new type of state emerged in the Hellenistic epoch—Hellenistic kingdoms combining the features

of Oriental despotic states and the polis organisation of the cities. The Hellenistic polis is, however, rather different from the classical Greek one. The earlier principles of the polis structure—*eleutheria* (freedom, political independence), *autonomia* and *autarkia*—underwent considerable changes both in the old poleis and those newly founded by the Hellenistic rulers. Poleis that formed part of the Hellenistic states lost their political and economic independence; they were no longer free agents on the international arena, and had to obey the laws promulgated by the head of state. The independence of the polis organs of self-government—the popular assembly, council and appointed officials—was restricted. The position and the socio-political role of the Hellenistic polis place it between the classical Greek polis and the Roman municipium.

In the Hellenistic period, essential changes took place in the ethnic and social stratification of the population. The ethnic distinctions between Greeks from different parts of Greece and even between Greeks and Macedonians lost their former significance, for they were all Hellenes in the eyes of the conquered peoples of the Near East and north-eastern Africa, their language and culture differing from those of the local population. In the course of time, however, the ethnic term “Hellene”, as we have mentioned, acquired social signification as well: the “Hellenes” were now those sections of the population whose social position permitted them to receive an education after the Greek model and to live in an appropriate style, regardless of their ethnic origin.

That socioethnic process was reflected in the moulding and spreading of a common Greek language, the so-called *koine*, which became the language of Hellenistic literature, the official language of all the Hellenistic states, and later, side by side with Latin, the official language of the eastern half of the Roman empire.

All these changes in the economic, social and political spheres were accompanied by a restricting of the socio-psychological makeup of the man of the Hellenistic epoch. The instability of the foreign and domestic political situation—continual wars between states, internal domestic strife, political revolutions in the poleis, and social movements on the local and national scale—brought about the impoverishment, ruin and enslavement of some and the enrichment of

others, development of slave-owning and slave-trade, migration of the population from one locality to another, from the rural areas to the city and from the city to the *chora*. All this, in its turn, undermined the links within the civil communities of poleis and the communal links in villages, intensifying individualistic attitudes. The polis could no longer guarantee the freedom and material well-being of the citizen; personal ties with members of the royal administration and patronage of the powers that be assumed greater importance. From generation to generation, psychological attitudes changed, and the former citizen of the polis became the king's subject not only in formal status but also by political conviction. The same process somewhat later occurred in the Roman empire.

*Hellenistic culture.* The most important heritage of the Hellenistic world was the culture that it created, which spread to the outlying areas of the Hellenistic world and made a great impact on the development of Roman culture (particularly of the eastern Roman provinces) as well as the culture of the other peoples of antiquity and of the Middle Ages.

Hellenistic culture was not uniform throughout the Hellenistic world. In each region, it was moulded by the interaction between the stable, traditional local elements and those brought by the conquerors and migrants, Greeks and non-Greeks. The particular combinations of these elements, and the forms of their synthesis, were determined by many concrete factors—specific for each given locality—the size of the various ethnic groups (local and newly arrived), the level of their culture, social organisation, conditions of economic life, political situation, etc. Even if we compare the major Hellenistic cities—Alexandria, Antioch on the Orontes, Pergamum, etc., where the Graeco-Macedonian population played the leading role—distinctive features of cultural life in each of them stand out quite clearly. They are naturally more distinct in the interior regions of the Hellenistic states, such as the Thebaid, Babylonia, or Thrace.

Still, Hellenistic culture may be regarded as something integral and original, since all its local variants have certain common traits determined, on the one hand, by the obligatory presence of elements of Greek culture in the overall synthesis, and on the

other, by analogous trends in the socioeconomic and political development of society throughout the Hellenistic world. The development of cities, commodity-money relations, and commercial links in the Mediterranean countries and the Near East largely conditioned the moulding of the material and non-material culture in the Hellenistic period. The emergence of Hellenistic monarchies, which absorbed some features of the polis structure, facilitated the formation of new legal relations, of a new socio-psychological makeup of man and society as a whole and of novel ideology. Compared with classical Greek culture, the content and nature of Hellenistic culture manifested more clearly the differences between the Hellenised upper strata of society and the indigent urban and rural population, which retained its cultural traditions more tenaciously.

Evidence of interaction between Hellenic and local elements in the material culture is found in the development of handicraft techniques, in armaments, shipbuilding, town planning, and applied arts. The same phenomena were observed in other areas of artistic creativity, above all in architecture. The architecture of the Hellenistic poleis continued the Greek traditions, but side by side with temple construction civil engineering—the building of theatres, gymnasia, bouleuteria, and palaces—now played a major part. The interior and exterior decoration of buildings became more varied and sumptuous; porticoes and columns, mostly of the Ionic and Corinthian orders, were widely used; colonnades were built to frame separate edifices, the *agora*, and sometimes the main streets (cf. the porticoes of Antigonos Gonatas, of Attalus on Delos, or those in the main streets of Alexandria). Kings built or restored cities and numerous temples dedicated to Greek and local deities. The projects were stupendous and the means insufficient, so construction sometimes lasted dozens and hundreds of years. The most magnificent and beautiful of these temples were believed to be Sarapeum in Alexandria, built by Parmeniskos in the 3rd century B. C.; the temple of Apollo at Didyma near Miletus, the construction of which began in 300 B. C., lasted nearly 200 years and was never completed; the temple of Zeus in Athens, designed by the architect Cossutius, begun in 170 A. D., and finished at the beginning of the 2nd century A. D., under emperor Hadrian; and the temple of Artemis in Magnesia on the Meander,

designed by the architect Hermogenes (begun late in the third or early in the 2nd century, finished in 129). The temples of the local deities – the temple of Horus at Edfu, of the goddess Hathor in Denderah, of Khnum in Esnae, of Isis on the island of Phylae, of Esagila in Babylon, or the temples of the god Nabu, son of Marduk, in Borsippa and Uruk – were built just as slowly. The temples of the Greek gods were built according to classical canons with slight deviations. The architecture of the temples of the Oriental deities also rigorously followed the traditions of ancient Egyptian and Babylonian architects, and the only traces of Hellenistic influences are found in separate details and in inscriptions on temple walls.

A novel development of the Hellenistic period was the construction of new types of public buildings – libraries (in Alexandria, Pergamum, Antioch, and other cities), the Museum (in Alexandria), the lighthouse of Pharos, the Tower of the Winds in Athens. The Pharos lighthouse, erected by the architect and builder Sostratos of Cnidus and believed to be one of the seven wonders of the world, was the most magnificent and complex of these structures. Its tower crowned with a statue of Poseidon rose to the height of 120 metres. Its base was a square, with the sides aligned on the cardinal points; it narrowed down towards the central part, an octahedron with sides aligned on the directions of the prevailing winds; and the upper part was a cylindric lantern equipped with metal mirrors. The fuel for the lighthouse was carried by donkeys up a winding staircase or path within the building. The Pharos lighthouse was at the same time an observation post, a sort of weather station, and a fortress, presumably with a garrison and supplies of provision and water (in a tank in the underground part of the tower). The octagonal Tower of the Winds in Athens, with a weather-vane in the shape of a Triton figurine on the roof, apparently played similar meteorological functions. It also had sundials on the walls and a water clock within for bad weather.

The Alexandrian Library was believed to be the largest library of antiquity. Books were brought here from all the countries of the classical world, and in the 1st century B.C. it possessed, according to legend, some 700,000 scrolls. We have no description of the building in which the Library of Alexandria was housed; it must have adjoined or been part of the Museum complex (the temple of the Muses).

The Museum itself was part of the palace complex. Besides the temple, it included a large house with a common dining-hall for the scholars attached to the Museum, and an *exedra* – a roofed gallery with seats for work – and a place for walks.

The construction of such public edifices, which served as centres of scholarly work or application of scientific knowledge, may be regarded as a symptom and a material expression of the growing role of science in the practical and spiritual life of Hellenistic society.

The knowledge accumulated in the previous epoch in the Greek and the Oriental world, and the possibility of bringing them together necessitated the classification of the available material and some kind of summing up. Differentiation began in the syncretic body of scientific concepts, as mathematics, astronomy, botany, geography, medicine and philology became separated from philosophy and established as sciences in their own right.

Euclidean *Elements* (or *Principles*) can be seen as a synthesis of mathematical knowledge of the ancient world. For centuries, its postulates and the deductive methods of proof formed the basis of textbooks on geometry. The works of Appollonius of Perga on conic sections laid the foundations of trigonometry. Archimedes of Syracuse, who worked for a while at Alexandria, discovered one of the principal laws of hydrostatics, worked out the basics of infinitely large and infinitesimal calculus, formulated some important propositions of mechanics and invented many technical devices.

The Babylonian centres of studying astronomical phenomena, which existed long before the Greeks took up these observations, and the works of the Babylonian fourth-century scholars Kidenas and Sudines had a great influence on the development of astronomy in the Hellenistic period. Aristarchus of Samos (310-230 B.C.) formulated the hypothesis that the earth and the planets revolve around the sun along circular orbits. Seleucus of Chaldea tried to substantiate that proposition. Hipparchus of Nicaea (146-126 B.C.) discovered (or repeated Kidenas's discovery of) the phenomenon of equinoctial precession, measured the duration of the lunar month, compiled a catalogue of 805 stationary stars with their coordinates, and divided them into three classes according to their brightness. He rejected, however, Aristarchus's hypothesis on the grounds

that the orbits he suggested did not accord with observed planetary motions, and his authority helped to assert the geocentric system in antique science.

Alexander the Great's campaigns considerably extended the Greeks' geographical horizons. On the basis of this extended knowledge, Dicaearchus drew up a map of the world (c. 300); he also calculated the height of many mountains in Greece. Eratosthenes of Cyrene (275-200), an extraordinarily erudite scholar who for some time was in charge of the Alexandrian Library, assumed the earth to be a globe and calculated its circumference at 252,000 stadia (approx. 39,700 kilometres), which practically coincides with the actual circumference (approx. 40,076 kilometres). He also insisted that all seas form a single ocean, and that it is possible to arrive in India by sailing round Africa or west of Spain. His hypothesis was supported by Posidonius of Apamea (135-51), a scholar with wide-ranging interests who studied the tides of the Atlantic and volcanic and meteorological phenomena, and proposed the division of the earth into five climatic zones. In the 2nd century, Hippalus discovered monsoons, and Eudoxus of Cyzicus showed their practical importance by sailing to India across the open sea. Numerous geographical descriptions, later lost, formed the foundation for Strabo's overview, *Geography*, which he finished c. A. D. 7. It contains the description of the whole world known at that time, from Britain to India. Along with purely geographical data, Strabo included in his *Geography* a considerable body of historical information and legends about the countries and peoples described.

The study of nature and man made considerable advances. Theophrastus, Aristotle's disciple and successor in the Peripatetic school, wrote his *History of Plants* after the model of Aristotle's *History of Animals*, systematising all the information accumulated by the beginning of the 3rd century B. C., including the data gathered during Alexander's campaigns. Later works of antique botanists made some significant additions only to the knowledge of medicinal herbs, which was connected with the development of medicine. There were two trends in medical knowledge in the Hellenistic epoch – the "dogmatic" or "bookish", pursuing the task of speculative cognition of the nature of man and the causes of diseases concealed in it, and the empirical one, aimed at the study and

treatment of each concrete disease. Herophilus of Chalcedon (3rd century B. C.) made a great contribution to the study of the anatomy of man. He wrote of the existence of nerves and established their connection with the brain. He also expressed the hypothesis that human cognitive abilities were connected with man's brain; he believed that it was blood, and not air, that circulated in the veins and arteries, that is to say he arrived in fact at the idea of blood circulation. His conclusions apparently rested on personal experiences in the dissection of corpses, and on those of Egyptian experts in medicine and mummification. Erasistratus of Chios (3rd century B. C.) was just as famous; he distinguished between motor and sensor nerves and studied the anatomy of the heart. Both of them performed difficult operations and had their schools of disciples. Heraclides of Tarentum and other empirical physicians paid great attention to the study of medicines.

This short account of the scientific achievements of Hellenistic times should show that science as a whole became one of the most important forms of social consciousness. Other indications of this development were the museums and libraries established at the courts of Hellenistic kings, to increase their prestige, and their patronage of scholars and poets, who were provided the necessary facilities for work. The material and moral dependence on the royal court imposed, however, a definite imprint on the form and content of scientific and artistic creativity, so that Timon the Sceptic had every right to call the scholars of the Alexandrian Museum "capons in a chicken coop".

The literature of the Hellenistic epoch was extremely extensive and varied; the sources mention more than a thousand names of writers and poets, including scientists and philosophers. The traditional genres – epics, tragedy, comedy, lyrics, rhetorical and historical prose – continued to develop, but new types of works also emerged, such as philological studies (cf. the work of Zenodotus of Ephesus on the true text of Homer's poems), dictionaries (the first Greek lexicon was compiled by Philetas of Cos c. 300), biographies, poetic versions of scientific treatises, epistolography, etc. Splendiferous and sophisticated poetry abounding in mythological imagery but devoid of sincere feeling and divorced from real life flourished at the courts of Hellenistic kings. Its highest achievements were the idyls and



hymns by Callimachus of Cyrene (310-245 B. C.), by Aratus of Soli (3rd century), the epic poem *Argonautica* by Apollonius of Rhodes, and other works. Brief and expressive epigrams, a genre in which all poets were active, particularly in the 2nd and 1st centuries B. C., were more intimate and had greater vitality. Epigrams evolved from dedicatory inscriptions and epitaphs and varied greatly in content, expressing brief appraisals of works by poets, artists and architects, portraying certain individuals, or describing scenes of everyday life and erotic ones. The epigram expressed the poet's feelings, moods and thoughts, and only in the Roman epoch did it become mostly satirical. In the late 4th and early 3rd centuries B. C., most popular were the epigrams of Asclepiades, Posidippus, and Leonidas of Tarentum, and in the 2nd and 1st centuries, those by Antipater of Sidon, and Meleager and Philodemos of Gadara.

Theocritus of Syracuse (born in 305 B. C.) was a major lyrical poet, author of bucolic idyls. That genre arose from the Sicilian competitions of shepherds (*boucoloi*) in the performance of songs, distichs or quatrains. Theocritus's bucolic verse abounded in vivid realistic descriptions of nature and graphic images of shepherds, while in other idyls, similar to mimes but with a lyric colouring, he painted scenes of urban life.

Epic poems, hymns, idyls and even epigrams mostly appealed to the taste of the privileged strata of Hellenistic society, whereas the interests and tastes of the broad masses were reflected in such genres as comedy and mime. Menander (342-291 B. C.) was the most popular of the authors of the New Comedy, or comedy of manners, which flourished in Greece in the late 4th century B. C. and was concerned with citizens' private rather than public life.

Menander wrote at the time of the formation of the Hellenistic states. Political instability, frequent changes of oligarchic and democratic regimes, the ravages of frequent wars on Greek territory, ruin of some people and enrichment of others—all this brought confusion into the citizens' moral and ethical notions and undermined the foundations of the polis ideology. Uncertainty about the future and belief in destiny and chance grew. These moods were reflected in the New Comedy. An indication of Menander's popularity in Hellenistic society and later in the Roman epoch was the fact that many of

his works—*Court of Arbitration*, *The Samian Woman*, *Crop-head*, *Grumbler*, *The Shield*, *The Man from Sicyon*, *The Hateful One*, and others—have survived in the papyri of the 2nd-4th centuries found in remote cities and *komas* of Egypt. Menander's works proved to be so viable because he stressed the best traits of his characters, typical of his times, and asserted the new, humanistic attitude to each individual regardless of his position in society, to women, foreigners, and slaves.

The mime, just as the comedy, has existed in Greece since remote times. It was frequently an improvisation performed in a square or at a feast in a private house by an actor (or actress) without a mask who used facial expressions, gestures and tones of voice to portray various characters. That genre became particularly popular in the Hellenistic epoch. But no texts of mimes have survived except those of Herondas (3rd century), and these were intentionally written in the Aeolian dialect that had become obsolete by that time, and were not meant for the broad public. Still, they give some idea of the style and content of such works. Scenes written by Herondas pictured a procuress, a keeper of a brothel, a cobbler, a jealous mistress torturing her slave lover, and other characters. In a vivid scene laid at a school, a poor woman plaintively described how hard it was for her to pay tuition fees, and asked the teacher to give a sound thrashing to her son, an idler who played dice instead of studying—which the teacher did willingly, aided by the other pupils. Unlike the Greek literature of the 5th and 4th centuries, Hellenistic literature was not concerned with the major socio-political and ethical problems of those times, its themes being limited to the interests, morality and everyday life of the narrow social group to which a given author belonged. Many of these works therefore quickly lost their social and artistic significance and were forgotten, and only some of them left a trace in the history of culture.

The themes, images and moods characteristic of fiction were paralleled in sculpture and painting. Monumental sculpture, intended for squares, temples and other public edifices, continued to develop. Its characteristic features were mythological themes, vast scale, and complexity of composition. Thus the Colossus of Rhodes, a bronze statue of Helios created by Chares of Lindus (3rd century B. C.), rose to a height of 35 metres and was believed to be an artistic

and technical wonder of the world. The battle of the gods and titans on the famous frieze, more than 120 metres long, on the altar of Zeus in Pergamum (2nd century B. C.), consisted of a great number of figures and was marked by dynamism, extraordinary expressiveness and dramatism. In early Christian literature the Pergamum altar was called "the temple of Satan". Schools of sculpture at Rhodes, Pergamum and Alexandria, which continued the traditions of Lysippus, Scopas and Praxiteles, evolved in this period. The statues of the goddess Tyche (Destiny), patroness of Antioch, of Nike from the island of Samothrace, Aphrodite from the island of Melos (Venus de Milo), and Aphrodite *Anadyomene* of Cyrene are believed to be masterpieces of Hellenistic sculpture. The emphatic dramatism, characteristic of the Pergamum school of sculpture, later degenerated into cold theatricality characteristic of such sculptural groups as *Laocoön* or the *Farnese Bull*.

Portrait sculpture (as illustrated, e. g., by Polyeuctus's *Demosthenes*, c. 280) and portrait painting (cf. the Fayum portraits) achieved a high level of skill. Apparently the same moods and tastes that engendered Theocritus's bucolic idyl, epigrams, the New Comedy and mimes, were reflected in realistic sculptural images of old fishermen, shepherds, numerous terracotta figurines of women, peasants and slaves, in the portrayal of comic characters, in depicting everyday scenes and rural landscapes in mosaic and wall painting. The influence of Hellenistic art can also be traced in traditional Egyptian sculpture (reliefs on tombs and the statues of the Ptolemies), and later in Parthian and Kushan art.

Art and literature mostly reflected the worldview aspects of man's private life and inner world, whereas historical and philosophical works revealed his attitude to society, and to political and social problems of the times. Historical works mostly dealt with events of the recent past and current events. In form, the works of many historians bordered on fiction: the presentation was skilfully dramatised, and rhetorical devices were used to produce an emotional impact on mass audiences. That was the style in which the history of Alexander the Great was written by Callisthenes (end of the 4th century) and Clitarchus of Alexandria (mid-3rd century); the history of the Greeks of the western Mediterranean, by Timaeus of Tauromenium (same period); the history of Greece between 280 and 219, by Phylarchus,

an adherent of Cleomenes's reforms (late 3rd century). Another trend in historiography, biased though it might be, followed a dryer and more rigorous method of presenting facts. That was the style of the history of Alexander's campaigns written by Ptolemy I (after 301), of which only fragments have survived, the history of the struggles between the *diadochoi* written by Hieronymus of Cardia (mid-3rd century), and other works. Polybius, a major historian of the 2nd century (198-117), was the author of the *Universal History* in 40 books, which dealt with the events of 221-146, i. e., the period when Rome emerged as a Mediterranean power and subdued Greece and Macedonia. Following Polybius, universal histories were written by Posidonius of Apamea, Nicolaus Damascenus, Agatharchides of Cnidus, and Diodorus Siculus. But research in the history of separate states continued: chronicles and decrees of Greek poleis were studied, and interest for the history of Oriental countries grew. In the early 3rd century, Manetho, an Egyptian priest, wrote a history of pharaonic Egypt in Greek, and Berossos, a Babylonian priest, a history of Babylonia, also in Greek; later, a history of the Parthians was written by Apollodorus of Artemites. Historical works in local languages also appeared, as, e. g., the *Books of the Maccabees* about the revolt of Judea against the Seleucids.

The choice of topics and presentation of events were undoubtedly affected by the political struggles and political and philosophical theories of that epoch, but these are often difficult to detect, as most historical works of the Hellenistic period have survived only in fragments or accounts of later authors. Only the relatively well-preserved work by Polybius permits an investigation of the methods of historical research and some historico-philosophical concepts characteristic of the times.

Polybius, a prominent statesman of the Achaean League, was taken, after the defeat of Macedonia in 168, to Rome as one of a thousand hostages. There, he became an associate of Scipio and absorbed Roman ideology, particularly the idea of the providential mission of Rome. Polybius's work was intended to show why and in what way the entire world known at that time found itself under Roman domination. In his view, the history of the world was determined by destiny: it was Tyche who forcibly brought together the histories of separate countries

to start world history, and it was Tyche who gave the Romans world domination. The power of Tyche was manifested in the causal links between all events. At the same time Polybius insisted on the great role of man, of outstanding personalities. He endeavoured to demonstrate that the Romans had been able to create a powerful empire due to their perfect state structure, which combined elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy, and due to the wisdom and moral superiority of its statesmen. Idealising the Romans and their state structure, Polybius tried to make his compatriots reconcile themselves to inevitable subordination to Rome and the loss of political independence by the Greek poleis. The appearance of such views showed that the political attitudes of Hellenistic society had basically departed from the polis ideology.

This was even more evident in philosophical doctrines. The schools of Plato and Aristotle, which reflected the worldview of the civic community of the classical city state, lost their dominant position with the decline in the political significance of the polis. Simultaneously, the influence of the schools of Sceptics and Cynics, which had been born of the crisis of the polis ideology in the 4th century B.C., increased. But the most popular teachings of the Hellenistic period were those of the Stoics and of Epicurus, which emerged late in the 4th and early in the 3rd centuries B.C., absorbing the principal features of the new epoch's worldview. The Stoic school, founded in 302 in Athens by Zeno of Cyprus (c. 336-264 B.C.), included many major philosophers and scholars of the Hellenistic world, such as Chrysippus of Soli (3rd century), Panaetius of Rhodes (2nd century), Posidonius of Apamea (1st century), and others. These were men of different political orientation and stature, ranging from kings' advisers (like Zeno) to inspirers of social reform (Sphaerus was Cleomenes's tutor in Sparta, Blossius, the tutor of Aristonicus at Pergamum). The Stoics mostly concentrated on man as personality and on ethical problems, leaving problems of the essence of being in the background. The awareness of the instability of man's social and economic position at a time when links with the polis or rural community weakened and military and social conflicts were rife, was interpreted by the Stoics as man's dependence on a supreme benevolent force (*logos*, nature, god) directing all that is in accordance with reason. In their

view, man was no longer a citizen of the polis but of the cosmos; to achieve happiness, he must learn the natural law of phenomena predetermined by the supreme force (destiny) and live in harmony with nature. The eclecticism and ambivalence of the Stoics' principal propositions ensured their popularity in various strata of the Hellenistic and later Roman society, permitting the merging of Stoic doctrines with mystic faiths and astrology, paradoxically combined with certain elements of materialism, mostly in ontology.

The philosophy of Epicurus was a further step in the development of Democritus's materialism (the doctrine of spontaneous deviation of atoms from rectilinear movement), but it also focused primarily on man. Epicurus's main task, as he saw it, was to free man from the fear of death and of destiny: he asserted that the gods had no influence over the life of nature and man, and endeavoured to prove the materiality of the soul. Man's happiness lay in achieving tranquility and undisturbed peace of the soul (*ataraxia*) through cognition, self-perfection, and avoidance of passions, sufferings, and vigorous activity.

Gradually joining forces with the followers of Plato's Academy (the so-called Middle Academy), the Sceptics levelled their criticism mostly against the epistemology of Epicurus and the Stoics. They also identified happiness with *ataraxia*, but the latter was interpreted as the realisation of the impossibility to cognize the world (Timon the Sceptic, 3rd century B.C.), which signified a renunciation of the cognition of the surrounding reality and of social activity.

Although they reflected certain general traits of the worldview of their epoch, the doctrines of the Stoics, Epicurus and Sceptics were intended for the more cultured and privileged circles. Unlike any of them, the Cynics conducted their talks, or *diatribes*, before crowds in the streets, squares, at harbours, proving the unreasonableness of the existing order and preaching poverty not only in word but also in deed by their mode of life. The best-known Cynics of the Hellenistic times were Crates of Thebes (c. 365-285) and Bion Borysthenites (3rd century B.C.). Crates came from a rich Theban family, but, absorbing the ideas of Cynicism, he dismissed his slaves, gave away his riches and, like, Diogenes, began to lead the life of a mendicant philosopher.

Sharply criticising his philosophical opponents, Crates preached moderate cynicism and was renowned for his humaneness. He had a great number of pupils and followers, including Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school. Bion was born in the northern Black Sea region, a son of a freedman and a *hetaera*, and in his youth was sold into slavery. Receiving on the death of his master freedom and a legacy, he came to Athens and joined the school of Cynics. It was Bion who introduced the genre of *diatribes*—speeches and talks preaching Cynical philosophy, full of polemics with their opponents and acute criticism of generally accepted views. But the Cynics did not go beyond criticism of rich men and rulers, searching for happiness in the renunciation of needs and desires, in the “beggar’s bag”, and opposing the mendicant philosopher not only to the kings but also to the “foolish mob”.

The element of social protest reflected in the philosophy of the Cynics was also expressed in the social Utopia that emerged in the Hellenistic epoch. Euhemerus (late 4th-early 3rd centuries B.C.) in his fantastical story about the island of Panchaea, and Iambulus (3rd century B.C.) in his description of a voyage to Sun Islands created the ideal of a society free from slavery, social vices and conflicts. Unfortunately, their works have only survived in an account by the historian Diodorus Siculus. Iambulus drew a picture of life on Sun Islands, where people of high spiritual culture lived in exotic surroundings without kings, priests, family, property, or division of labour. These happy people worked together, performing public duties in rotation. In his *Sacred History*, Euhemerus also described a happy life on an island lost in the Indian Ocean, but the population of that island was divided into priests and men of intellectual occupations, farmers, shepherds, and warriors (there were no landowners). There was a “Sacred History” on a column of gold on the island describing the deeds of Uranus, Chronos and Zeus who once arranged the life of the islanders. In expounding the *History*, Euhemerus actually explained his views on the origin of religion: the gods were merely outstanding personalities that once existed, organisers of social life who proclaimed themselves to be gods and established their own cult. The appearance of this hypothesis was undoubtedly connected with the spreading of royal cults in the Hellenistic states.

Hellenistic philosophy was created by the privileged, deeply Hellenised strata of society, and it is difficult to trace the influence of Oriental elements on it, whereas Hellenistic religion was the product of the broadest strata of the population and its most characteristic feature was syncretism of many religious faiths, with the Oriental heritage playing a great role.

The gods of the Greek pantheon, identified with ancient Eastern deities, acquired some new features. The forms of their worship changed. Some Oriental cults (of Isis, Cybele and others) were adopted by the Greeks in an almost unchanged form. Tyche, the goddess of destiny and patroness of Antioch, the capital of the Seleucid kingdom, achieved the eminence of a principal deity. The cult of Sarapis, established in pursuance of the religious policy of the Ptolemies, was a distinctly Hellenistic phenomenon. Apparently life itself at Alexandria, with its multilingual population with their different customs, faiths and traditions, prompted Ptolemy I the idea of founding a new religious cult that could unite this motley foreign crowd with the indigenous Egyptian population. The atmosphere of spiritual life in those times demanded that such an act should take a mystic form. According to the sources, an unknown deity appeared before Ptolemy in a dream; that dream was interpreted by the priests, a statue of a deity in the shape of a bearded youth was then moved from Sinope to Alexandria, and that youth was proclaimed Sarapis—the god that combined the traits of Osiris-Apis of Memphis and the Greek gods Zeus, Hades and Asclepius. Ptolemy’s principal assistants in the shaping of the cult of Sarapis was the Athenian Timotheus, a priest from Eleusis, and the Egyptian priest Manetho, from Heliopolis. Apparently they succeeded in lending the new cult form and content that accorded with the spiritual needs of the times, for the worship of Sarapis fairly quickly spread through Egypt, and later Sarapis and Isis became the most popular Hellenistic deities; their cult existed until the triumph of Christianity.

The local differences in the pantheon and cult forms in various regions of the Hellenistic world continued to exist, but certain universal divinities combining the functions of the most worshipped deities of various peoples gradually became widespread. Zeus Hypsistes (the Highest) emerged as one of the primary gods, identified with Phoenician Baal,

Egyptian Ammon, Babylonian Belus, Judean Jehovah and many other principal deities of various regions (such as Zeus Dolichenus of Asia Minor). His numerous epithets—Pantokrator (Omnipotent), Soter (Saviour), Helios (Sun), etc.—point to an unusual expansion of his functions. Zeus's rival in popularity was Dionysus, whose cult, with its mysteries, was close to that of Osiris in Egypt and Sabasios and Adonis in Asia Minor. Of the female deities, the Egyptian Isis, who embodied many Greek and Asian goddesses, and Mother of the Gods of Asia Minor, became the principal and almost universally worshipped divinities. The syncretic cults which originated in the East spread to the poleis of Asia Minor, Greece and Macedonia, and later to the western Mediterranean.

Relying on the ancient Oriental traditions, Hellenistic kings did their best to spread the royal cult. That phenomenon was engendered by the political needs of the newly formed states. The royal cult was in fact one of the forms of the new Hellenistic ideology combining the ancient Oriental notions of the divine origin of royal power, the Greek cult of heroes and *oekistai* (the city founders), and the philosophical theories of the 4th and 3rd centuries B.C. on the nature of state power. The cult of kings embodied the idea of the unity of the new Hellenistic state, magnifying the king's political authority through religious rites. Just as many other political institutions of the Hellenistic world, that cult was inherited by the Roman empire and further developed in it.

The decline of the Hellenistic states and the beginning of the Roman aggression, accompanied by aggravation of social conflicts, impoverishment of the population, and mass enslavement of war captives, brought in its wake significant changes in Hellenistic culture. Throughout the Hellenistic epoch, works in local languages were written which retained the traditional forms (religious hymns, funeral and magic texts, instructions, prophecies, chronicles, and fairytales) but reflected to some extent the features of the Hellenistic worldview. From the end of the 3rd century B.C., the role of these works in Hellenistic culture began to grow. *Ecclesiastes*, one of the books of the Bible, written at the end of the 3rd century B.C., is permeated with profound pessimism. Wealth, wisdom, work were all "vanity of vanities", according to its author. Rationalistic elements in the worldview receded in

the face of religion and mysticism, while mysteries, magic and astrology became widespread. At the same time, signs of social protest increased—social Utopias and prophecies gained popularity again.

Papyri have preserved numerous magic formulas with which men hoped to make gods or demons change their destiny, cure diseases, destroy an enemy, etc. Initiation into mysteries was seen as offering a chance of direct communication with the gods and freedom from the power of fate. *The Tales of Khamuas*, a wise man of Egypt, described his search for the magic book of the god Thoth, which made its owner exempt from the power of the gods; the transfiguration of an ancient powerful magician into Khamuas's son; and the miraculous deeds of the boy magician. Especially curious among these deeds was Khamuas's voyage into the next world, where the boy magician showed his father the ordeals of a rich man and the blissful life of the righteous poor men next to the gods.

Attempts to put the social Utopia into practice were made by the Judaist sects of the Essenes in Palestine and *therapeutai* in Egypt, which appeared in the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C. and combined religious opposition to Judaist priests with the assertion of alternative forms of socioeconomic existence. According to such ancient authors as Pliny the Elder, Philo of Alexandria, and Josephus Flavius, the Essenes lived in communities, jointly owned property and worked together, producing only the things that were necessary for consumption. Entry into the community was voluntary, the internal life, management of community affairs and religious rites were strictly regulated, the younger members obeyed their seniors in age and seniority; some communities prescribed continence. The Essenes rejected slavery; their moral, ethical and religious views were marked by messianic and eschatological features and the opposition of community members to the surrounding "world of evil". The *therapeutai* may be regarded as an Egyptian variety of the Essenes. They, too, jointly owned property, rejected riches and slavery, limited their needs to the vital ones, and were extremely pious and ascetic. They also had many traits in common with the Essenes in religious rites and the community's internal organization.

The discovery of the Qumran texts and archaeological research have given unquestionable proof of

the existence in the desert of Judea of religious communities related to the Essenes in their religious, moral, ethical and social principles of organisation. The Qumran community existed from the middle of the 2nd century B. C. to A. D. 65. Along with Biblical texts, a number of apocryphal works were found in its "library", and, most importantly, a number of texts which were created within the community itself – Rules, hymns, comments on Biblical texts, and texts of apocalyptic and messianic character, which gave a notion of the ideology of the Qumran community and its internal organisation. The Qumran community had many features in common with the Essenes but opposed itself more sharply to the surrounding world, which was reflected in the doctrine of the opposition between the "kingdom of light" and the "kingdom of darkness", of the struggle between the "sons of light" and the "sons of darkness", in their preaching on the "New Alliance" or the "New Testament", and in the great role of the "Teacher of Righteousness" – the founder and preceptor of the community.

The significance of the Qumran manuscripts is not, however, limited to evidence of the Essenes as a socio-religious trend in Palestine in the 2nd century B. C. and 1st century A. D. Comparison of these manuscripts with early Christian and apocryphal works shows the similarities in the ideological concepts and principles of organisation of the Qumran and early Christian communities. There was also a significant difference between them: the former was a closed organisation keeping its doctrine secret in the expectation of the Messiah's arrival, whereas Christian communities, which regarded themselves as followers of Christ the Messiah, were open to all, spreading their doctrine among the broadest masses. The Qumranite Essenes were merely the forerunners of the new ideological trend, Christianity, which emerged later, in the times of the Roman empire.

The subordination of Hellenistic states by Rome, accompanied by the extension of Roman forms of political and socioeconomic relations to the countries of the eastern Mediterranean, had as its reverse side the penetration of Hellenistic culture, ideology and elements of the socio-political structure into Rome. Art objects, libraries (e. g., the library of Perseus brought to Rome by Aemilius Paulus), and educated slaves and hostages taken to Rome as booty made a great impact on the development of Roman

literature, art and philosophy. Adaptations of themes from Menander and other authors of the New Comedy by Terence and Plautus, the flourishing of the Stoic, Epicurean and other philosophical schools on Roman soil, and the spreading of Oriental cults to Rome were only some of the more conspicuous signs of the influence of Hellenistic culture.

Not only these but also many other features of the Hellenistic world and its culture were inherited by the Roman empire. They were most fully manifested in the last centuries of its existence in its eastern half.

But the immense significance of the Hellenistic epoch in the history of world civilisation goes far beyond this. It was at that time that, for the first time in the history of mankind, contacts between Afro-Asian and European peoples became stable and regular rather than temporary and accidental, involving cooperation in creating the economy, culture and new modes of social life within Hellenistic states, and not just military campaigns or commercial relations. Social and ethnic antagonisms naturally imposed their imprint on this cooperation, in which some parties proved to be in a dependent position while others, in a privileged one. But successes in the development of agriculture and the crafts and in creating perennial works of art were undoubtedly achieved by the joint efforts and combination of production and artistic skills of Balkan, Near Eastern, and Egyptian craftsmen, peasants, builders, architects, artists and sculptors.

This interaction in material production was reflected, in a mediated form and in varying degrees, in the nonmaterial culture of the Hellenistic epoch. It would be an oversimplification to see it merely as a development of the Greek culture. It is no accident, for instance, that the most important discoveries in the Hellenistic period were made in those branches of science where knowledge previously accumulated in the ancient Oriental science clearly interacted with that of Greece (astronomy, mathematics, medicine). Hellenistic religious ideology was a particularly vivid manifestation of joint creativity of the Afro-Asian and European peoples. It was ultimately on this same basis that the politico-philosophical idea of the universe, of the world as a single whole, arose which was reflected in the creation of *Universal History* (Polybius and his followers), in the Stoic theory of the cosmos and the cosmopolitan, etc.



The areal of the spreading and influence of Hellenistic culture, syncretic in its nature, was extremely extensive, including Western and Eastern Europe, the Near East and Central Asia, and North Africa. Hellenistic elements can be traced not only in Roman but also in Parthian, Graeco-Bactrian,

Kushan and Coptic cultures, and in the early medieval cultures of Armenia and Iberia. Many achievements of Hellenistic science and culture were inherited by the Byzantine empire and the Arabs and became part and parcel of human culture as a whole.

## Chapter 15

### *From the Origin of Rome to the Unification of Italy*

*The Problem of the Emergence of Rome and the Epoch of the Kings.* Until recently, the early history of Italy and Rome was only known from accounts by classical authors, often contradictory and unreliable, since Greek writers had little interest for Italy, and works by Roman historians date from later times (mostly from the 2nd century B. C. and later), while earlier ones are only known in fragments. Their accounts of the history of Rome and Italy echoed myths and legends that were hard to separate from descriptions of real events. Most early Roman historians, or annalists, belonged to aristocratic families and laid special stress on the exploits of these families. Besides, with rare exceptions, we only have Roman versions of the historical events. There are only brief and muffled reports of what the conquered peoples thought of Rome, and Roman sources are thus practically unverifiable.

As a result, many modern historians, particularly in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, believed early Roman history to be almost completely unknowable. This sort of hypercritical attitude has been revised in recent times, when rigorously scientific archaeological excavations were conducted on a vast scale, and linguistic methods, in particular analysis of ancient Italic languages, were vastly improved. Archaeological and linguistic data have extended our knowledge of ancient Italy; they have showed that what was earlier believed to be complete myths, absorbed by the Roman historical tradition, were founded on real historical facts, and that events later embellished by legend actually occurred, though in a way rather different from the myth. For example, according to a fairly late

Roman tradition, Greeks from Arcadia led by king Evander settled on the Palatine hill already before the Trojan War, teaching the local population to cultivate land and establishing the Lupercalia festivities in honour of the Arcadian god Pan, identified with Italic Faunus, to increase the fertility of the flocks and to protect them from wolves; returning from Spain, Hercules visited Evander and fought the Cacus monster; Evander was an ally of the Trojan hero Aeneas, son of Anchises and Venus, who, after the fall of Troy, disembarked with his men and son Julius in Italy, fought the Latins, conquered them, married Lavinia, daughter of king Latinus, founded the city of Lavinium (which shows that he was a forebear of Romulus and Remus, founders of Rome), and was deified after his death, while his son became the forefather of the gens Julia.

Recent archaeological and linguistic studies have shown that there was an Arcadian settlement in c. 12th century B. C. on the Palatine hill, that the name Evander (Euandros) is an Arcadian name, and that the Lupercalia rites have a great deal in common with the rites of the cult of the Arcadian god Pan. 6th- or 5th-century B. C. figurines were also discovered portraying Aeneas carrying Anchises from burning Troy on his shoulders; other finds include a sanctuary (the so-called *heroon*, i. e., the place of the cult of a Hero) dedicated to Aeneas in a very ancient tomb (8th century B. C.), and an inscription in which he was called "Lar Aeneas". A connection has been established between the legends about Aeneas, and the sacred penates he had brought from Troy, and the arrival in Italy of Thracian-Illyrian tribes, since it was believed that Aeneas

came from the family of Dardanus, king of the Illyrian tribe of the Dardans, and Romans themselves linked their penates with the mysteries in honour of the Cabeirian gods performed on the island of Samothrace. In Lavinium, remnants of 9th- and 8th-century settlements have been found. These and other coincidences between linguistic and archaeological data, on the one hand, and the Roman tradition, on the other, have increased the faith in the latter, although it is still believed by many historians to be unreliable on many accounts, and many issues of the early history of Italy and Rome are either moot or completely unexplored.

It has become clear that ancient Italy, and in particular the Tyrrhenian coast of Latium, earlier believed to be inhabited by primitive tribes isolated from the external world, came into contact with the Mediterranean world at a rather early stage. The Achaeans maintained links with this area in the Mycenaean epoch. The founding of such important cities in the south of Italy as Metapontum, Sybaris, and Croton was attributed to them. They exported the metals and alum found in Toscana, imported handicraft products, and they also spread their cults, as for instance the cult of Artemis. The Rhodians, who probably founded Paestum and Naples, also kept up links with Italy. They also made an impact on Latium, where the cults of Dioskouroi and Hercules flourished, and objects brought from Greece have been found. The ties with Greece were not interrupted after the fall of Mycenae either, but they were particularly intensified at the time of the great Greek colonisation. In 706 B.C., the Spartans founded Tarentum in Apulia. The cities previously founded in Lucania and Calabria acquired new significance; Paestum and Cumae flourished in Campania. Excavations on the island of Pithecusa in the Bay of Naples have shown that in the 8th century B.C., all Greek cities in Italy, and some cities of Latium, had links with all the centres of Greece, with Syria, Egypt and Phoenicia. The Greeks made considerable impact on the local population, with which they traded both by sea and by land, through the rather extensive network of roads leading inland.

The indigenous population was rather varied—ethnically, linguistically, socioeconomically, and culturally. Genetically, it was in part Indo-European. The non-Indo-European pastoral tribes of the Ligurians, who later mixed with the Celts (a branch

of Indo-Europeans) coming from the north, seem to be the most ancient inhabitants of Italy (to be precise, of its north-western part). The regions of Verona and Padua were inhabited by the Rhaeti, who were shepherds and hunters; next to them lived the warlike Veneti, who made the conquered population their helots, and killed slaves during the funeral of their master. The much more advanced Umbro-Sabellic tribes inhabited central Italy. Linguistically, they were divided into two groups. One group included the Faliscs, the Marsi, the Aequi, the Volscians, the Hernici, the Vestini, the Peligni, the Frentani; the other, the Samnites, the Herpini, the Lucani, the Brutii, the Osci. The warlike Samnites, who lived in the Apennines, were the least advanced. The Adriatic shores were inhabited by the Picenes and Iapyges who had come from Illyria.

A great role in the migration of the tribes was played by the so-called "sacred spring" custom, when the redundant younger generation set forth in search of new places of settlement. According to legend, the path that they took was pointed to them by some deity: Mars showed the way to the Marsi and the Mamerci; the goddess Ops, to the Osci; Vesta, to the Vestini; Vulcan, to the Volscians; or else it could be some animal dedicated to a deity: the bull showed the way to the Boviani; the wolf, to the Herpini, and the woodpecker, to the Picenes. Latium was inhabited by Latin tribes (30 in number, according to Pliny the Elder) united in a league which had its cult centre, dedicated to the goddess of the forest and maternity, Diana, on Lake Nemi near Aricia, and the one dedicated to Jupiter Latiaris with a shrine on Mount Alba near the city of Alba Longa, where representatives of the tribes annually met in council and to celebrate the festivities in honour of the god.

Most of the tribes inhabiting Italy lived in consanguine or neighbourhood communities, villages and so-called *pagi*, which had territories of their own, partly divided among the families, partly remaining in common use. The communities were headed by elders. Some of the communities united round a more significant and well-fortified urban-type settlement; here, rites were performed, the council of elders gathered, craftsmen settled, and products were exchanged. Such a city was governed by elected magistrates. We know from the tablets with ritual texts from the Umbrian town of Iguvium that

the territory of the city was considered to be sacred; annually, special priests went on a ceremonial round of the territory, offering sacrifices to the gods and reciting the proper prayers. More or less identical myths were connected with the founding of cities. Thus Praeneste was founded by Caecula. The city of Cures was founded by the son of the god Quirinus and a maid that fell asleep in his temple. The legend of the founding of Rome belongs in the same category. Romulus and Remus were descendants of Aeneas, the sons of Rhea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, king of Alba Longa, driven from that city by his brother Amulius, and of the god Mars; or, according to a different version quoted by Plutarch, they were the sons of a slave woman and the hearth deity. Thrown into the Tiber on Amulius's orders, they were found by a she-wolf who suckled them under a fig-tree that afterwards became sacred; later they were found and brought up by the herdsman Faustulus and his wife Acca Larentia. When the children grew up and learnt the truth about their origin, they reinstated their grandfather as king of Alba Longa and, together with a crowd of runaways from various places, founded Rome. In a quarrel, Romulus killed Remus and became solitary ruler of the new city. He invited to a feast his neighbours, the Sabines, who were unwilling to give their daughters in marriage to the disreputable Romans. During the feast, Romulus's warriors abducted the Sabine maids, which led to a war with the Sabines, but it ended at a plea from the women. The Romans and the Sabines became one people, *populus Romanus Quiritium*, ruled at first jointly by Romulus and Titus Tatius, the king of the Sabines, and after the latter's death, by Romulus alone.

Roman scholars believed Rome to have been founded in 753 B. C., on April 21, the day of the festivities in honour of Pales, the ancient goddess of shepherds. Although the story of the founding of Rome is a myth, excavations have shown that it was in the middle of the 8th century B. C. that the settlements which had originally arisen on the Palatine hill and later on the other hills were united. Such settlements formed communities or *pagi*, whose traces continued to exist on Roman territory until the 1st century B. C. At some time in the past a *pagus* may have been inhabited by members of one clan, which sometimes included several hundred descendants of one common ancestor from whom the clan's name was derived,

as well as clients—people who had lost their links with their own clan or came in search of the patronage of a strong local clan. We know from later sources that clients received land allotments on the clan's lands from the patron, and they were obliged to accompany them during war and help them in every way. The bonds within the clan and the clientele gradually changed in character, but they always played a great role in Rome's social life. However, even before the unification of separate settlements in one city, the clan community was gradually ousted by the neighbourhood one. Members of clans migrated, and the clans themselves became divided into large families, each headed by the father, the *pater familias*. But members of stronger and older clans continued to play the leading role in territorial communities.

At the time of the emergence of Rome, Italy was largely dominated by the Etruscans, who inhabited the territory of modern Tuscany and were gradually moving towards the valley of the river Padus (modern Po), where their centres were Arretium and Perusia, and towards Campania, where Capua on the lands of the Osci rose to greatest prominence.

The origin of the Etruscans was a matter of debate already in antiquity, and scholars still argue about it. According to some authorities, they were migrants from Asia Minor or from the north; according to others, they were autochthonous. It is not yet clear to what group the Etruscan language belonged, and there are therefore no linguistic pointers on their origin. But a general outline of their history and culture can be drawn from the information we find in antique authors and from materials yielded by archaeological excavations. The Etruscans had a highly developed metallurgy, with centres at Populonia and Vetulonia. Here, various objects were made of iron mined on the island of Ilva (modern Elba), and of bronze, lead, zinc, and precious metals. Tarquinii, Arretium, and Perusia were centres of textile industry. Other cities were agrarian rather than industrial. Shipbuilding was a major craft. Etruscan warships and merchant ships were built by skilled craftsmen, and Etruscan merchants could therefore compete with Greek and Carthaginian ones, combining sea trade with piracy. They traded with the cities of Greece, with Sicily, Corsica, Sardinia, Spain, and raided the islands of the Aegean, capturing slaves and other booty. Con-

struction techniques were highly advanced. Roads crossing Roman territory linked Tuscany with Campania. The cities were built strictly on the gridiron plan with two main streets crossing at right angles, and the streets running parallel to these two dividing the city into regular rectangles built up with one- and two-storey houses.

The Etruscan alphabet, together with the Greek one, formed the basis of the script used by the Italic tribes. Etruscan art, which we know from the paintings of rich tombs and vessels, from figurines, clay and metal masks, ornaments on mirrors, etc., was moulded by Oriental and Greek influences, but gradually it worked out its own style. Religion mostly involved ideas about the nether regions inhabited by monstrous daemons, where the dead person continued, as it were, his earthly life. Etruscans believed that a person of noble origin must depart for the next world in a chariot, provided with all the everyday objects that he might need; tombs were replicas of houses complete with all the furniture, and necropolises were built on the usual city plan. Gods and goddesses of heaven were also worshipped like Tinia, portrayed with lightning in his hands, Uni and Mnerva, corresponding to the Roman Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (it is a matter of debate whether they were borrowed by the Romans from the Etruscans or vice versa); the god of war and fertility Voltumna, and the great mother Turan. Aplu (Apollo) and Herkles (Hercules) were borrowed from the Greeks. The Etruscans had various ways of divining the will of the gods from numerous phenomena – lightning and thunder, the flight of birds, and the entrails, in the first place the liver, of sacrificial animals. The haruspices (who divined the will of the gods from animals' entrails) and augurs (who foretold events by the flight of birds) were believed to have received the very complex rules for the interpretation of divine omens from the revelations of a certain divine being called Tages, which rose from the earth; other revelations were ascribed to the nymph Vegoia and to Cacus, who was apparently connected with the cult of fire. Augurs divided the sky into definite areas with their rods; the liver was divided into 16 parts. Each area or part were devoted to a definite deity and were believed to be either favourable or unfavourable. All this wisdom was later absorbed by Rome.

We know little of the social structure of the Etrus-

cans. Presumably they had a powerful aristocracy, and in some cities aristocratic republics were established with elected magistrates or warlords (Mastarna), others were ruled by kings (the Lucumones). The royal insignia, later borrowed by the Romans, were the golden crown, the sceptre, the gold-embroidered purple toga, the double axe in a bunch of rods, the fasces, and seats ornamented with gold and ivory. The kings were at the same time supreme judges and priests. There was a considerable number of household slaves. The common people were free artisans or peasants dependent on the nobility. Together with mercenaries, these made up the Etruscan army. Later, in the 4th and 3rd centuries B. C., violent but unsuccessful democratic movements occurred in some Etrurian cities.

Etruscan cities formed leagues the focus of which was a common cult centre (one such league had its centre at the temple of Voltumna), but they retained complete autonomy. Links between the Etruscans and Carthage were particularly close. A bilingual gold plate was found at Pyrgi, the harbour of the city of Tarquinii, with a dedication in Punic and Etruscan to Phoenician Astarta, whom the Etruscans identified with their goddess Uni. It may be assumed that a Carthaginian settlement and temple were situated there. The alliance of the Carthaginians and the Etruscans was based on their enmity towards the Greeks, their chief rivals in sea trade. It is a fact that there were even major military conflicts between the Greeks, on the one hand, and the Etruscans and the Carthaginians, on the other. At the end of the 6th century the Etruscans were routed by Aristodemos, tyrant of Cumae.

Thus Rome emerged amidst extremely diverse tribes and peoples. Its convenient geographical situation on the bank of the navigable Tiber and on the roads leading from Etruria to Campania brought an influx of migrants and stimulated the development of crafts, commodity exchange and a rise in agriculture, along with livestock-breeding practised here from the earliest times. The valley of the Forum, and the hills – Palatine, Velia, Esquiline and Capitoline – were settled. The villages and *pagi* still retained a certain autonomy, but their community lands were already merging to form the nucleus of the future Roman public land – *ager publicus*. The cults of the separate settlements merged, too, the pastoral deities of the hill dwellers being identi-

fied with the agricultural gods of the valleys. The ancient cult colleges were doubled; thus there were now two colleges of the Luperci, the priests of Pan-Faunus, and two of the Salii, priests of Mars and Quirinus. The Palatine, Velia, Subura, Caelius and others were the first to be united in the Septimontium, which was probably the first name of the city and later the name of a festival including a ceremonial procession and sacrifices to the Tiber. That was the ancient *Roma quadrata* divided into four parts by the roads crossing in the Forum. The population was divided into three bodies each called *tribus* (apparently tribes) – Ramnes, Luceres and Tities – and 30 wards called *curiae*, each of which was subdivided into 10 clans or *gentes*. That artificial division was later ascribed to Romulus. The *curiae* had common lands, their own cults, and an elected head, the *curio*; each contributed a contingent of 100 foot, which formed a legion, and 10 horse from the most aristocratic and richest families, who formed the king's bodyguard. According to the legend, Romulus founded the city in the way prescribed by the Etruscan ritual, marking its boundaries with a plough drawn by a bull and a cow and lifting the plough where the gates of the city wall would be built. The land thus circumscribed was sacred territory "within the *pomerium*" (later, the *pomerium* was extended many times). There could be no armed soldiers or temples of foreign gods on this territory. Each year, a procession of the priestly college of the Arval brothers (*Fratres Arvales*, "brothers of the field") marched along its boundaries, purifying the city through sacrifices in the sacred coppice of the Dea Dia and prayers to the spirits of the ancestors, Lares and Mars, begging them to remove all evil from the city and help the people.

The traditions about the first kings of Rome are accepted by some historians (with the exception of the legends about Romulus) and rejected by others. Thus, according to Roman historians, Romulus (who suddenly disappeared after 30 years of rule, and was deified under the name Quirinus) was followed by the Sabinian Numa Pompilius, who added to Romulus's political and military institutions the principal religious establishments, including the priestly college of the *flamines* and the college of Vestal virgins, who tended the eternal fire in the temple of Vesta, the goddess of the city's sacred hearth, built by Numa. He also built the regia, or the king's resi-

dence, in the Forum, where all the principal sacred objects of Rome, the pledge of its prosperity, were kept: Mars's spear, the shield that fell from heaven and 11 other shields, replicas of the first one, which were made to prevent the enemies from stealing the original, and the penates brought by Aeneas. According to legend, Numa introduced the cult of loyalty to the oath, or *fides*, which formed the basis of the relations between citizens, patrons and clients, and later between the Romans and their allies. Numa also compiled a calendar, fixing holidays and business days, lucky and unlucky days (no undertakings could be started on unlucky days), and priestly books for the colleges of *flamines*, *pontifices* and others.

Putting aside the issue of the reliability or otherwise of the tradition concerning the first kings of Rome, we can now reconstruct the principal features of its life in this period. The main fact was an increasingly close unity of the population – the Roman people or the Quirites (the word *quirites*, just as the word *curia* and the name of the god Quirinus, apparently derives from *co-viria*, or "gathering of men"). At the head of the people stood an elected king, combining the functions of supreme priest, judge, legislator and military chieftain. The king consulted the Senate, or council of elders, presumably consisting of the heads of the *gentes*, but the most important issues were settled by the popular assemblies of the *curiae*, or the *comitia curiata*. After the king's death, his functions were performed by senators elected by casting lots, who ruled in rotation. They also proposed the candidacy of the new king, who was then approved by the people. The gens continued to play an important role (we know, for instance, that in later times, in the 4th century B. C., gens Fabia, 306 strong, counting clients and slaves, went to war against the Etruscan city of Veii), but the principal socioeconomic cell was the family – the property and the people in the power (*potestas*) of the father: his wife, sons, grandsons and greatgrandsons with their wives, unmarried daughters, clients, slaves, and freedmen. The father's power was absolute. The life and death of the family's members were in his power, he could sell any of them, and he appropriated their labour. None of them could have any property of their own, everything they acquired belonged to the father alone, and only the father could be a party to a contract. The father was also the supreme priest of the family cult, of which the



focus was the cult of ancestors, or Lares, who protected the house, the estate, the family, and saw to it that justice was observed in the relations within the family: thus, a slave or a younger member of the family appealed to the altar of the Lares to protect him from the excessive cruelty of an irate father or master. After the death of the father who was also included among the ancestor gods, his sons became independent individuals (*sui iuris*), heads of their families; they either continued to work together or divided the father's legacy. According to the tradition, Romulus gave two *jugera* of land (half a hectare) to each head of the family; these were, presumably, the homesteads. For the main part, Roman land was public. Everyone could occupy a plot and begin to cultivate it, becoming its owner, but the Roman community remained the supreme owner of land. If an owner ceased to cultivate his plot, the land reverted, as it were, to the common stock, and could be occupied by any other citizen—a rule that was effective throughout Roman history, as was the law that the head of the family was obliged to till his land well and to increase his property. It was believed that a city was rich when its citizens were rich, and, vice versa, the citizens prospered when the city was powerful and rich. Most of the land was pasture in common use—it could be used both by members of the *curiae* and those of the *pagi*.

We know little of the earliest Roman religion. Later, it experienced a strong Greek influence, and a great deal was forgotten and distorted, becoming incomprehensible to the Romans themselves. Most modern scholars see the Roman religion as a very dry one, based on petty regulation of rites and formulas of addressing the deity. It is pointed out that the Romans had no mythology, which is seen as a sign of their inability to perceive the world emotionally and poetically. Other researchers attempt to identify elements of a primordial Roman mythology similar to that which existed among other primitive tribes. Indeed, there are echoes of this mythology in the work of later writers. Thus it may be assumed that the two-faced god Janus (later the god of any beginning, of entry and exit), was worshipped in the earliest times as the creator of the world from chaos, the builder of the metal firmament (a double arch covered with bronze was erected in his honour in the Forum, allegedly by Numa), and as the god who encouraged the human species to multiply. The king

himself officiated as the priest of Janus. There may have existed a myth concerning the origin of men from trees, which were still worshipped (cf., e. g., the sacred fig-tree, and the oaks dedicated to Jupiter). Coppices dedicated to various gods and goddesses were regarded as sacred, as were springs inhabited by nymphs, and fire, worshipped as Vesta, the guardian of the community hearth, and as the god Vulcanus. The most ancient form of banishing a person was his "interdiction from fire and water", the symbols of communal unity. Numerous legends were connected with the wolf, dedicated to Mars. During the Lupercalia, the naked priests, the Luperci, whipped women with belts from the skin of a sacrificial goat, which was supposed to increase their fertility. The dead were worshipped as Manes, the gods living underground. They had to be propitiated with gifts on the days of remembrance of the dead, when they were believed to be present at the meals of their families, after which they were driven underground by incantations.

The triad of the most ancient principal gods included Jupiter, the god of heaven, thunder, lightning, and rain; Mars, who protected the community of the descendants of his son Romulus from dangers coming from the outside as well as from internal misfortunes; and Quirinus, the god of communal unity. Many other gods were also worshipped. The most important of these were Saturn, probably the god of sowing, although his original function is not clear; the goddesses of the earth, differently known as Tellus, Telumo, Ops; the deities of growing plants and those that protected cereals and fruit—Ceres, Liber, Libera, Pomona, Flora, Robigus; the shepherds' goddess Pales, whose festival the shepherds celebrated by leaping over bonfires and sulphurating sheep to cleanse themselves and their livestock of all things unclean, begging the goddess to forgive them their sins and to protect the health of their flocks, their dogs, and themselves; the god of the underground granary Consus; during his festival, the Consualia, shepherds staged competitions, and horses and mules were crowned with garlands. According to the legend, the Sabine maids invited by Romulus were abducted during the first Consualia. There were many other gods and goddesses whose significance was later forgotten, while the festivals and rites dedicated to them remained. Myths may have existed about sacred marriages between,

say, slave women as priestesses of the hearth and the god of the home fires, and about the birth of heroes from such marriages – heroes like Caecula, Romulus and Remus.

For a long time, researchers attached great significance to the influence of the Etruscan religion on the Romans. At present, however, more emphasis is placed on the Italic beliefs that had taken shape before the rise of the Etruscans.

Military campaigns against their neighbours played the decisive role in the life of the Romans. They began in March and ended in September. War was declared and peace concluded with special ceremonies and set formulas by priests of the college of Fetiales. At the beginning and conclusion of campaigns a horse was sacrificed to Mars, weapons and war trumpets were ritually cleaned, and the Salii, singing hymns, performed warlike dances in honour of Mars, carrying his shields and shaking his spear. Lands seized from the enemy were partly divided among the citizens, and partly added to the common stock.

Despite the continued independence of the separate communities, the unity of the city grew stronger. That process was especially intensified in the 6th century B.C. under the three last Roman kings – Tarquinius Priscus, Servius Tullius, and Tarquinius Superbus. All of them came from Etruria, which was then in the zenith of its strength and glory. Some scholars believe that Rome (Ruma, later Roma) was given its name by the Etruscans. They settled in considerable numbers in Rome, where an Etruscan quarter, mostly inhabited by craftsmen, arose. The Etruscans introduced the custom of according a victorious military leader a triumphant reception – a custom that assumed particular importance in later history. The organisation of the guilds of jewellers, carpenters, blacksmiths, potters, dyers, fullers, cobblers, and trumpeters was ascribed to Numa, but in the first centuries of the city's existence crafts remained household occupations, and only under the Etruscan kings did they become independent branches of the economy.

Trade expanded, as indicated by great numbers of imported objects from Etruscan and Greek cities found during excavations. The Romans traded with Carthage, among other cities. In 509, a treaty was concluded between Rome and Carthage which divided the maritime spheres of influence: the

Romans undertook not to enter Spanish waters, as the Carthaginians exported most of their metals from Spain. Construction techniques in Rome were improved; the facing of buildings with tiles with stucco mouldings was borrowed from the Etruscans. The Etruscan kings were said to have built an extensive system of drainage (the so-called *cloaca maxima*), cobbled the streets, and erected a great number of buildings, including the circus, where games in honour of the gods (competitions of charioteers and athletes) were introduced, and the famous temple on the Capitoline dedicated to the new triad of gods – Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, which also emerged under Etruscan influence. The Capitoline hill became the centre of Rome and a symbol of its power and glory. The greatest sacrificial ceremonies were held there; it was to the Capitoline that the triumpher's procession went, and here the triumpher, wearing the robes of Etruscan kings, put his golden crown at the feet of Jupiter and brought the thanksgiving sacrifices. The city's territory was expanded. The population grew to such an extent that Rome could now arm 600 equestrian warriors and 6,000 infantry, i. e., two legions, which now fought on the model of the Greek phalanx. After a number of victories over neighbouring communities, Rome became head of the Latin League, which now included 47 communities. The Diana cult was moved to Rome, and a temple of Diana was built on the Aventine.

The most striking figure among the Etruscan kings was the second of them, Servius Tullius, remembered by the Romans as a great reformer and the people's benefactor. According to the legend, he was born of Tarquinius Priscus's slave woman and the *Lar familiaris*. Tanaquil, the king's wise wife, foreseeing the exceptional gifts of the child, a special favourite of the goddess Fortune (he later built several temples in her honour), brought him up and helped him in his rise to eminence. After Tarquinius Priscus's death, he became king against the will of the Senate due to the support of the people, as he gave them land to make them free and independent of the aristocracy.

Servius Tullius was said to have introduced many important institutions, the most important of these being the introduction of census and the organisation of territorial tribes. Citizens were divided by the property qualifications into property classes that formed the army and the popular assembly (*comitia*

*centuriata*) which replaced the old (*comitia curiata*). The richest and most aristocratic families formed 18 centuries of equites or knights. Then came 80 centuries of men who could afford to buy heavy arms. Next followed 95 centuries of four property classes who could only afford light arms. To these were added two centuries of trumpeters and two centuries of craftsmen. Last came the century of the proletarians, who did not serve in the army as they could not buy arms at all. Later, when minted copper coins were introduced in Rome, the property qualifications were computed to asses (the time of the introduction of minted coins is uncertain; the 5th, 4th and even 3rd centuries B. C. are mentioned as possibilities). Members of the first class had to have not less than 100,000 asses; of the second, 75,000; of the third, 50,000; of the fourth, 25,000; and of the fifth, 12,500 asses. Each century had one vote in the popular assembly, and decisions were taken by a simple majority of the centuries. It is frequently stressed in scholarly literature that Servius Tullius's reform was plutocratic in character, since citizens of the first class, by forming a bloc with the equites, were always in the majority. The well-known French historian C. Nicolet has shown, however, that the reform had a more profound significance, introducing what Nicolet (citing Aristotle) calls proportionate or "geometric" equality; the sum of the citizens' rights equalled the sum of their duties. The richer the citizen and the nobler his family, the more he had to contribute to the commonwealth in terms of money and effort. For instance, when the city had to resort to a loan (the so-called *tributum*) in case of war, each gave in accordance with his property qualification. In later times, the census was taken every five years, and in dividing the citizens into classes, the censor took into account not only their property but also their services to society. The Romans themselves saw Servius Tullius's reform as a democratic one, for it gave a chance of promotion not only to the nobly born but also to gifted men, who could move on to a higher property class if they made a fortune through their industry and talent. Servius Tullius himself became a symbol of a worthy man attaining high status despite lowly birth. The division of the citizens into classes somewhat weakened the influence of the tribal aristocracy. A still greater effect in this respect had the division of the entire Roman territory into tribes—4 urban and 16 rural ones. The

clan organisation gave way to the territorial one. True, the tribal aristocracy remained influential enough. The rural tribes were known by the names of the aristocratic gentes—Cornelii, Claudii, Fabii, Horatii, Sergii, Papirii, etc., who had the greatest possessions on the tribe's territory. The urban tribes were named after the city blocks. As Rome conquered new lands, new tribes were organised, and their number ultimately rose to 35.

Servius Tullius's activities were fiercely opposed by the Senate, which was behind the king's assassination. But his son-in-law and successor Tarquinius Superbus continued his policy of developing crafts, trade and construction advantageous to the common people. He added some members from the less prominent families to the Senate. He was even accused of disrespect for the Senate, and of excessive expenditure on labour-consuming construction projects. Servius Tullius's and Tarquinius Superbus's policies were apparently similar to those implemented by contemporary tyrants of Greece, the south of Italy and of Sicily installed by democratic parties.

*The Establishment of a Republic and the Formation of the Roman Civic Community. The Conquest of Italy.* In 510 B. C., Tarquinius was banished by the insurgent defenders of "freedom", that is, of the power of the Senate, led by Junius Brutus, and the monarchy was replaced by an aristocratic republic.

The reign of the last Etruscan kings saw the formation of the orders of patricians and plebeians, of the aristocracy and the common people—a process of the greatest importance for the subsequent history of Rome. By the time of the expulsion of the kings, these two orders had taken definite shape, and the overthrow of the monarchy was a triumph for the patricians. Later, all political leaders defending the interests of the plebs, beginning with Spurius Cassius (early 5th century B. C.) and Manlius Capitolinus (early 4th century B. C.), who proposed to divide among the plebeians the public lands seized by the patricians and to cancel the plebeians' debts to the patricians, and ending with the Gracchi and Julius Caesar, who acted as leaders of the people, were invariably accused by the Senate of aspiring to royal power and tyranny, and the Senate brought about their destruction by fair means or foul.

The banishment of Tarquinius, who had supporters both in Rome and outside it (such as Lars Porsenna, king of the Etruscan city of Clusium, who began a war against Rome), was aided by the decline of the influence in Italy of the Etruscans defeated by the Greeks. The final defeat of the Romans over Porsenna and the expulsion of the Etruscan garrison from Rome became possible when Aristodemus, tyrant of Cumae, inflicted a crushing defeat on Aruns, Porsenna's son, near Aricia. Tarquinius's death in exile put a definite end to attempts at restoring royal power, and consolidated the republic.

The question of the original organisation of the republic is acutely debated in modern historiography. There is no doubt but that the king was replaced by elected magistrates. According to Roman historians, these magistrates, the consuls, were elected for a year; the first consuls were Junius Brutus and Valerius Poplicola (i. e., "lover of the people"), his accomplice in the plot against Tarquinius. The consuls had the highest authority (*imperium*) in times of peace and were supreme commanders during a war. In cases of extreme danger to Rome from external enemies or internal disturbances, the entire power was vested in a dictator elected for six months.

The priestly college of pontiffs, headed by the chief pontiff (*pontifex maximus*), which eclipsed the *flamines*, had to perform the cult rites and also record annually the most important events and the names of elected consuls in the so-called *fasti consulares*, or the lists of consuls. Some modern scholars believe that changes were later introduced in the earliest *fasti* to please the aristocratic families. Others have greater confidence in them, stressing that in the first decades of the republic there were both patricians and plebeians among the consuls; that is to say, that magistracy was then accessible to the plebs. Soon, however, the patricians blocked the plebeians' way to the consulate and to other magistracies added in the 5th century B. C.—that of praetor (who kept up order in Rome), quaestor (who was at first a consul's assistant and later had charge of the treasury), and censors. Only the patricians knew what days of the calendar were favourable to convening the popular assembly, and only they knew the legal procedure, which gave them an edge over both the popular assembly and the individual plebeians compelled to appeal to the court. The patricians' political

domination increased their economic supremacy, and vice versa. They occupied more and more of the public lands, while plebeians were ruined by the constant wars, crop failures, murrain, falling domestic and foreign trade and decline in the crafts in the wake of the expulsion of the Etruscans; debtors who could not pay their debts were enthralled or sold into slavery. The position of the plebeians is clear from Pliny the Elder's remark that, among the ancestors, a man who killed his colon (that is, a tenant), incurred the same liability as if he had killed an ox, and not a human being. In the words of another author, only patricians were regarded as freeborn in those times. On the path that Rome followed, the orders were becoming classes of major landowners and of dependent peasants and slaves, and a state was formed in which political power was in the hands of the dominant class. However, this mode of development, characteristic of many primitive societies, was slowed down by the stubborn and successful resistance of the plebeians against the patricians. The conflicts centred on three main issues: the plebeians demanded that newly conquered lands should be divided amongst them, whereas the patricians wanted to add them to the public lands open to their occupation; the plebeians insisted on cancelling debtor bondage and enslavement of insolvent debtors, which the patricians refused to concede; finally, in a bid to protect their rights, the plebeians demanded greater authority for the popular assembly and access to the magistracies and priesthood, whereas the patricians tenaciously held on to their privileges.

This struggle, now dying down, now flaring up, was interwoven with Rome's continual wars with the neighbours. It was partly the need to present a semblance of unity in the face of the enemy, and to avoid exciting the fury of the plebeians, who formed the basis of the Roman army, the infantry legions, that made the patricians satisfy the plebeians' demands one after another.

The first episode in the struggle between the patricians and the plebeians occurred during the war with Latin communities that made an attempt to throw off Roman hegemony. The plebeians refused to fight and retreated to Mons Sacer (the so-called first secession of the plebeians in 494). They only agreed to return on winning the right to elect, at separate meetings, tribunes of the people, defenders

of their interests, from their midst. Tribunes of the people could veto the orders of magistrates (with the exception of a dictator's orders), convene meetings of the plebs, and protect against injustice any plebeian who took refuge in their house, which was open day and night. The tribunes themselves were declared to be under the protection of the gods and inviolable; anyone who hurt in any way the person of a tribune of the people was cursed and became an outcast without any rights whom anyone could kill. The reconciliation between the patricians and the plebeians resulted in a splendid victory over the Latins at Lake Regillus and in the restoration of Roman hegemony. An alliance was concluded with the Latins which was called *foedus Cassianum* after the consul Spurius Cassius. Now the Romans would get half the booty won in a war waged jointly with the allies, while the allies divided the other half among themselves.

But the struggle between the patricians and the plebeians continued. The temple of the peasant deities—Ceres, Liber and Libera, a triad opposed, as it were, to the patrician triad on the Capitoline—built by Greek craftsmen from Campania, became the centre of the plebeian organisation. Soon, the cult of the Greek god Hermes (named Mercury in Rome) as the god of trade was adopted in Rome, and a college of grain dealers associated with that cult was organised. This was intended to stimulate imports of grain and thus stop unrest among the plebeians who suffered from bread shortages.

Relations between the orders again sharply deteriorated in the middle of the 5th century B.C. The plebeians demanded written laws to be able to fight the patricians' abuses. A board of ten, the *decemviri*, was elected in 451 B.C. to write down the laws approved by the popular assembly on ten tablets that were posted in the Forum and formed the basis for further development of Roman law. Judging by surviving fragments of these laws, they were largely based on common law characteristic of other peoples that stood on approximately the same stage of development, but they also introduced some new features. They regulated the legal procedure and established penalties for various crimes (e.g., high treason, arson, theft, sorcery, etc.), reserving the citizen's right to appeal to the popular assembly as the highest judicial organ, if he was under threat of execution or banishment. Harsh laws on debts were

confirmed, but an article was introduced according to which a patron who cheated his client was cursed. The father's authority was restricted by an article stipulating that he could sell his son into slavery three times, after which the son was no longer in the father's power. There was a very important interdiction on personal privileges to anyone. That affirmed the citizens' equality before the law and ruled out the practice, very common among ancient societies, of handing over a territory to some highborn individual who collected taxes from that territory. The entire territory of the Roman community was to remain entirely under community control. Here also belonged the law forbidding the handing over of lands to temples, which precluded the emergence of an economically and therefore politically strong priesthood in Rome. The laws confirmed the citizen's right to occupy abandoned plots, which after two years of tenancy became their property. That rule did not apply to foreigners—only a Roman citizen could possess land on Roman territory. The ancient laws also regulated the procedure for the alienation of the property of a *pater familias*. Objects of the greatest importance for agriculture—land allotments, cattle, and slaves—were alienated through a complicated procedure of mancipation including the pronouncement of fixed formulas in the presence of five witnesses and a weigher who weighed the copper paid for the property. An estate usually passed on to the sons, to next of kin on the male side, or to other members of the gens. If a person wanted to make a will disinheriting a son, it had to be approved by the popular assembly. All these are signs of the community's rigorous control over private as well as public property.

The first committee of the *decemviri* was succeeded by a second one, of extreme anti-plebeian orientation. It added two more tablets of laws (that is why the first written Roman law is called the law of 12 tablets), forbidding marriages between patricians and plebeians and abolishing the office of tribunes of the people, which led to the second secession of the plebeians. The situation was aggravated by food shortages and the plague. As a means of averting the plague the temple of Apollo, the first Greek god to be included in the Roman pantheon under his own name, was erected in Rome. A new reconciliation between the patricians and the plebeians was achieved with the restoration of the power of the

tribunes of the people and the lifting of the ban on marriages between members of the two orders. To provide the plebeians with land, the Romans began to plant colonies on conquered territories. In the 5th century B. C., some 10 colonies were founded, and in the 4th century, 15. The colonies were subject to Roman and Latin laws, but their inhabitants could only become Roman citizens by moving to Rome or to the territory of one of its tribes. The colonies were meant to be Rome's strongholds and bearers of Roman influence but, unlike other ancient conquerors, Romans did not turn the conquered peoples into helots—on the contrary, they abolished the helot estate where they found one. This policy, along with expanding colonisation, largely ensured the stability of Roman power on conquered territories.

Internal strife receded into the background to some extent due to an outbreak of war for control over certain important trade centres of Latium. After a war that lasted ten years, the Etruscan city of Veii bordering on Latium was destroyed, which consolidated Rome's influence both in Latium and in the south of Etruria. But now a new and terrible danger threatened Rome. The Celtic tribes, whom the Romans called the Gauls, had moved in on Italy's north and by the year 390 reached Latium. They inflicted a major defeat on the Romans on the river Allia, then took Rome by storm and sacked it, burning down many buildings. Only the Capitol's garrison, commanded by Manlius, who was later named Capitoline, held out for seven months, until the Gauls, learning of attacks on their lands by the Veneti, left with a large ransom in gold. A great many buildings and the pontiff's records were destroyed by the fires. The Gallic invasion remained in the memory of Romans as a terrible misfortune, and the Gauls, as Rome's eternal enemies.

The entire first half of the 4th century B. C. was taken up by wars with Etruscan and Latin cities, in which the Romans ultimately gained the upper hand. In 358 B. C., the city of Caere was taken. Previously, the conquered cities of Latium were included in the Latin League as allies, retaining their autonomy. Caere, as an Etruscan city, was given a special status, which was termed *ius Caeritum* and later extended to many other conquered cities that surrendered unconditionally, i.e., recognised Rome's legal right to their lands, people and property. Caere was deprived not only of independence

in external affairs but also of its laws and courts; it had to accept the laws and the courts of the Romans, to contribute contingents to the Roman army and to pay the *tributum*; its people became Roman citizens with all the obligations that Roman citizenship entailed without the right to participate in the Roman popular assembly or to vote in the elections of magistrates. The victory over Caere and its allies gave the Romans access to the grain and metals of Etruria and greatly consolidated their positions. According to a census of the mid-4th century B. C., there were already 255,000 Roman citizens at that time, and they could raise 10 legions. The new treaty with Carthage, concluded in 348, again divided the spheres of maritime influence, which pointed to a revival of Roman trade. Judging from the introduction of a tax on manumissions in 357, there were already great numbers of slaves in Rome who were used in different capacities.

The frequent wars necessitated further concessions to the plebeians. In 367 B. C., a new law was adopted after a fresh outbreak of disturbances, proposed by the popular tribunes Gaius Licinius Stolo and Lucius Sextius. According to that law, one of the consuls had to be elected from among the plebeians; it was forbidden to occupy more than 500 *jugera* (125 hectares) of public land or to graze upon them more than 100 head of cattle and 500 sheep; landowners were required to hire a definite number of free men as labourers; the interest already paid on debts was to be deducted from the principal. The law of Genucius (341 B. C.) stipulated that both consuls could be elected from among the plebeians. The dictator Camillus erected a temple to the goddess of harmony between the citizens, Concordia, to mark the reconciliation of the orders that followed the introduction of that law.

Soon the Romans had to fight other enemies, the tribes of the Lucanians and Samnites, who spread throughout Campania and Apulia after the decline of the Etruscans, seizing Capua, the richest city of Campania, as well as Cumae, Nola, and Pompeii. Those Samnites who remained in the mountains continued to raid the rich farmlands of the valleys. In 343, Capua turned to Rome for help, and the ensuing wars between the Romans and the Samnites, the Latins, the Etruscans, and Capua that later betrayed Rome, lasted until 290. During the hostilities against the Samnites in the mountains,



where the phalanx battle order was unsuitable, smaller and more mobile units, the maniples were used, which ensured the success of the Romans. In the end, the Romans won a complete victory in these wars of attrition. For the Latins, it meant the end of the *foedus Cassianum*. They were no longer allies but Rome's subjects, citizens without a vote, like those of Caere. Many cities were given the status of municipia, that is, they were obliged to pay tribute; their lands were confiscated, and colonies of citizens were planted on these lands. The extremely fertile lands round Capua, the Falernian fields, became Roman public land. Victories over the Gauls still remaining in the north of Italy gave Rome the lands along the Adriatic coast and in the valley of the Padus. According to some computations, by the end of the 4th century B.C. the Romans had a territory of 20,000 square kilometres, which permitted them to establish new colonies and increase the army of peasants ready to fight hardily for new lands and booty.

Now the Romans found themselves face to face with the Greek cities of the south of Italy, which had previously had no fear of Rome, as she had no navy. But in 312 B.C. the Romans elected special *duumviri navales* entrusted with the task of building warships, and began to consider seriously the need for achieving supremacy on the sea. These pretensions led to a conflict with Tarentum, which turned for help to Pyrrhus, king of Epirus, who enjoyed the support of Egypt. Pyrrhus sent 3,000 soldiers to Tarentum commanded by Cineas, who knocked together an anti-Roman coalition of Greek cities as well as the Samnites, the Lucanians and the Brutii. Fifty battle elephants were received from Egypt. In 280, Pyrrhus himself came over to Italy and started the hostilities. The Romans, who had previously never encountered battle elephants, were defeated in the very first battle, but Pyrrhus himself suffered staggering losses (hence the expression "Pyrrhic victory"). In 275, Pyrrhus was utterly defeated and left Italy. In the next eight years Rome occupied all the cities of Magna Graecia. They retained a certain measure of autonomy but were obliged to supply Rome with warships. The Samnites and the Etruscans were finally subdued.

Rome became an unchallenged head and master of the federation of Italic cities and tribes of extremely diverse levels of development—from the agrarian, industrial and trading cities of Magna

Graecia and Etruria, with their very high culture, to the Samnites, Marsi, and others who were still at the primitive communal stage. The conquerors and the conquered mutually influenced one another, the Italic cities absorbing Roman political and socio-economic institutions, language, and cults. In their turn, the Romans also assimilated the cults of the vanquished peoples following the ancient custom of evocation—inviting the deity of a hostile city to take the side of the Romans and promising to build a temple in its honour in return. Between the year of the founding of the republic and the end of the war with Pyrrhus, more than 20 temples were built to old and new deities.

Considerable changes also took place in Rome's internal life. The plebs won one victory after another. In 326, the Poetelian law banned enslavement for debts. An insolvent debtor paid with his property, not his person. The torture or corporal punishment of Roman citizens were also forbidden. According to the law of Q. Publilius Philo of 339 B.C., confirmed by the law of Publius Hortensius of 287 B.C. (*lex Hortensia*), decisions taken at meetings of the plebs (the plebiscites) had the full force of laws. From then on, the *comitia centuriata* were replaced by meetings of the tribes, where there were no census distinctions (*comitia tributa*). Open ballot was later replaced by the secret vote, lest patrons should influence the will of their clients. It was prohibited for patrons to demand payment of money from their clients. The law of 311 gave the people the right to elect 16 out of 24 military tribunes. By the *lex Ogulnia* of 300 B.C., the way to the priestly colleges of augurs and pontiffs was thrown open to the plebeians. The office of the chief pontiff became an elected one. Censor Appius Claudius admitted sons of freedmen to the Senate; as for the freedmen themselves, who had Roman citizenship but had previously been included only in the urban tribes, they were now distributed among all the tribes in an attempt to democratise the latter. The establishment of colonies, the setting of a limit to land property, the rich booty divided among soldiers, and the introduction of salaries (stipends) for the soldiers—all this improved the position of the plebs.

Thus by the beginning of the 3rd century B.C., Rome evolved into an antique civic community, owing to the victories of the plebs, as had Athens through the triumphs of the demos. As the well-

known British historian M. I. Finley shrewdly observed, Greece and Rome demonstrated a phenomenon fairly rare in antique societies – the inclusion of peasants into an urban community as citizens having equal rights with town-dwellers. In Rome in particular, the peasants – farmers and warriors – were for a long time regarded as the salt of the earth, one might say, and were held in higher esteem than town-dwellers. It was this phenomenon which predetermined the development of Rome as a civic community. Its principal features were the existence of both collective and private land property, though community ownership was supreme, and private plots did not differ from occupied public lands in the right of alienation, identical for both, but in the fact that private plots were exempt from rent while a rental had to be paid for the occupied lands to the Roman people's treasury; the near identity of the concepts of landowner, warrior and citizen; the right of every citizen to receive land and other means of subsistence; the equality of the citizens' political and legal rights; the supreme authority of the popular assembly on all issues concerning both the body of the citizenry and each individual citizen; and the principle of "geometric" equality, which implied contributions from each individual to the common good, understood as the good for each citizen.

As the chances for exploiting compatriots as serfs or slaves sharply decreased, mostly foreigners were made into slaves and placed outside civic society. Distribution of the still not very numerous slaves among families, where they were supervised by the masters who had absolute authority over the members of the family and especially over slaves, and emancipation of clients and colons, who became full-fledged citizens and owners of their land allotments, slowed down the formation of the classes of big landowners and dependent peasants, and of a strong state mechanism that was necessary for the suppression of exploited strata. Rome returned, at a new and higher stage, as it were, to the community system, with its council of elders, elected officials, and a popular assembly. In that period, just as in the next two centuries, the state apparatus did not yet take shape; the army, consisting of citizens, only served to suppress resistance from the outside; there was neither police nor organs of prosecution; taking a case to court was the private affair of the plaintiff,

who had to bring both the defendant and the witnesses to court himself, and after the trial, to carry out the sentence. The heavy penalties for criminal offences envisaged by the laws of the 12 tablets were gradually replaced by fines (or banishment, at most), and the triumvirs who punished criminals, as well as the *duumviri* who dealt with particularly grave offences, gradually lost their functions. Besides, a tribune of the people could personally interfere in the trial at any stage, imposing a veto or freeing the accused. Only the army was bound by iron discipline: a commander could impose any punishment on the soldiers, including the so-called decimation, i. e., the execution of each tenth soldier in a unit that showed cowardice or insubordination.

The ideology that dominated society accorded with the civic community system. It was based above all on the concept of "the good of all" and on each citizen's duty to spare neither property nor labour nor life itself for the well-being of the citizenry as a whole. Everyone was expected to do their duty in their appointed positions: patrician and the richest of the plebeian families had to perform their duties of magistrates free, arrange games and spectacles for the people at their own expense, and command the legions; citizens of more modest means were obliged to fight bravely, to till their lands conscientiously, to bring up their children, and to take care of the well-being of their family. A sense of duty permeated the relations between the citizens and the gods officially included into the Roman pantheon, between the members of a family and its deities, between fathers and sons, and between the citizens and the magistrates. All these relations were covered by the concept of *pietas*. The second basic concept was freedom, *libertas*, the freeborn citizen's right to freely express his will, which distinguished him from slave and even freedman, both of whom had to conceal their thoughts. The free man also had to have certain virtues that set him apart from the slave – courage, quiet dignity, stern reticence, incorruptibility, and honouring his word, or *fides*. *Pietas*, *libertas*, and *fides*, together with courage, or *virtus*, which became synonymous with all virtue, were the cornerstones of the Roman civic community. These ideological attitudes, identical for all free Romans, which grew even firmer with the establishment of the equality of the orders, helped them to recover quickly from the worst defeats and to win new vic-

tories. The two centuries from the establishment of the republic to the achievement of equality between the orders formed the basis of the "Roman myth", remaining in the memory of the subsequent generations as the ideal times of the ancestors who lived simply and modestly (which is incidentally supported by archaeological excavations, where finds of imported and expensive objects are few) and were renowned for their exceptional courage and patriotism. A whole series of half-legends about the Romans of those times became part and parcel of the Roman and later of European culture. The heroes of these legends are Mucius Scaevola, who slipped into Porsenna's camp in order to kill him and on being caught burnt his hand on the fire in the king's tent to prove the courage of Roman youths; Horatius Cocles, who defended, together with two other warriors, the bridge across the Tiber against Porsenna's Etruscans, giving the Romans the time to prepare for defence, and then destroyed the bridge and swam across the river to his side; Manlius Torquatus (given that name after he killed a Gallic chieftain in single combat and took his torques, or neck ornament), who executed his own son for a breach of

military discipline during a war with the Latins; Furius Camillus, who took the city of Veii and begged the gods to turn their wrath against him and not the city of Rome, if its military successes were disagreeable to them (accused later of concealing part of the booty, he was banished from Rome but, when the Gallic invaders came, he forgot the old hurt, returned to Rome, assumed command as dictator and defeated the Gauls); Cincinnatus, whom the ambassadors that came to offer him the dictatorship during the war with the Volscians, found walking behind a plough, and who returned to his field after his victory; Curius Dentatus, who defeated the Samnites and Pyrrhus and took as his reward only a wooden sacrificial vessel and a plot of land which he could cultivate with his own hands; he was cooking turnips when the Samnites' ambassadors came to him with great amounts of gold, but he rejected their gifts saying that as long as he could be content with turnips, he preferred to have power over those who had gold rather than gold itself. The memory of these models of "the virtues of the ancestors" was revered in later epochs, but gradually a moral decline set in in Rome.

## Chapter 16

### *The Rise of the Roman Empire. The Crisis of the Republic*

*Roman Expansion in the Mediterranean Region. Changes in the Socioeconomic Structure of Rome.* The peoples and tribes with which Rome was destined to come in contact varied greatly in the level of their socioeconomic, political and cultural development. Macedonia, Greece, Asia Minor, Syria and Egypt were ruled by Hellenistic kings; they were debilitated both by internal social conflicts and by wars. The western Mediterranean was dominated by Carthage. Founded in the 8th century B. C. as a Phoenician colony, it gained independence after the conquest of Phoenicia by Assyria and grew rich and powerful through transit trade and the exploitation of the subdued, tribute-paying Libyan tribes. Power was in the hands of big landowners whose estates were run on principles of rationally organised slave labour (worked out theoretically by a certain Mago whose books were later translated into Latin), rich shipowners and traders. The supreme organs were the council of elders with 300 members, the council of 30, a college of judges of 400 members, and elected magistrates or suffetes (*suffetim*). The common people were in fact barred from participation in politics and from serving in the army, which consisted of mercenaries. Taking possession of western Sicily, with a stronghold at Lilybaeum, as well as Corsica and Sardinia, and founding several colonies on the Spanish coast, Carthage controlled sea trade in the western Mediterranean.

The population of the Iberian peninsula was of extreme ethnic diversity. The peninsula was exceptionally rich in metals, including precious ones, and this attracted Phoenicians, Carthaginians, and Greeks since very early times; trade in metals ac-

celerated the development of the south of the peninsula, where gold and silver were mostly mined. At the end of the 2nd millennium B. C., the kingdom of Tartessus arose in the south-west, which was famous for its wealth. This kingdom with clearcut social differentiation and written laws kept up trade relations with the entire Mediterranean. At the end of the 6th century B. C., Tartessus disintegrated for unknown reasons, but its culture made a great impact on the Iberian tribes which lived on its territory. They were also influenced by the Carthaginian and Greek colonies founded on the peninsula. The Iberians built cities ruled by aristocrats or kings, they had a writing system of their own and highly advanced art. The central and north-western parts of the peninsula were inhabited by the aboriginal tribes of the Asturians, the Cantabrians, the Celts and the Celtiberians. Some of them still lived in small village communities collectively owning their land, while others already had fortified cities, such as Tarragona, Termantia, or Numantia, with their councils of elders, popular assemblies, and warlords. The latter recruited their warriors who pleaded allegiance to the chieftains and believed it to be a disgrace to outlive their commander killed in battle without avenging his death. The Celts brought well-developed metallurgy and agricultural technology with them, but the poor quality of soil on the uplands, suitable only for livestock-breeding, forced the mountain tribes to pillage the valley, fight one another, or serve as mercenaries in Carthaginian and Greek armies.

A considerable part of Europe (modern Britain, France, Switzerland, and Belgium) were inhabited by the Celts; their tribes also varied in social struc-

ture. In Britain, for instance, they were at a very low level of development, while the Gallic tribes achieved a higher social and economic development owing to a relatively high agricultural technology, the skills of their metallurgists, and trade. Especially prominent among them were Druid priests and the tribal aristocracy. Highborn Gauls had extensive land property and large clienteles, and the common people became increasingly dependent on them. In some areas, royal power still survived, while among other peoples it gave way to oligarchic rule.

Beyond the Rhine lived the Germans. They did not yet lead a settled life and had no private land ownership. They elected their chieftains and settled all their affairs at popular assemblies or *tings*. The eastern coast of the Adriatic was occupied by the Illyrians, skilled seamen and pirates. In the 3rd century B. C., they were temporarily united under queen Teuta.

That was Rome's environment in the epoch when it took steps to subordinate the Mediterranean region. The First Punic War with Carthage was the first step in that direction. The conflict broke out when the Oscan tribe of the Mamertines seized in 289 B. C. the city of Messina, established a democracy there and began to interfere with the shipping in the Messina Straits. Hiero II of Syracuse went to war against them in 265. The Mamertines then turned to Rome for help, reminding her of their origin from Mars, the father of Romulus. For his part, Hiero II concluded an alliance with Carthage. The Roman Senate hesitated, but the *comitia centuriata*, fearing a blockade of the Messina Straits, pronounced themselves in favour of war. The war, in which the Romans now gained victories, now suffered defeats, lasted nearly 20 years. In the course of the war, the Romans mastered the art of naval warfare, in particular the tactics of grappling and boarding enemy ships (first used by the consul Gaius Duilius). In 241 B. C., they defeated the fleet of the Carthaginian admiral Hamilcar Barca off the Aegates or Aegusae Islands, after which negotiations began and a peace treaty was concluded according to which the Carthaginians ceded Sicily to Rome and had to pay an indemnity of 36 million denarii during 20 years. All Sicily, with the exception of Hiero's kingdom, came under the Roman rule. It became the first Roman overseas province ruled by a Roman governor who commanded the occupation

force, and it had to pay Rome one-tenth of the crops and grazing taxes, a total of 24 million denarii a year. The Greek communities of Sicily were declared free cities and paid no taxes. Soon, Rome also seized Sardinia and Corsica, which became its second province.

Roman losses in the war were enormous. They lost a total of 600 warships. The 50 million denarii borrowed from rich citizens as a *tributum* could not be paid back from the booty and the indemnity. In 264-233, the number of citizens fell from 293,234 to 270,213. Still, in 229 the Romans were able to send 200 ships against the pirates of queen Teuta, seize the island of Corcyra and force the cities of Apollonia and Epidamnus to recognise Roman protectorate. Between 225 and 218, they defeated the Ligurians and the Celts in the north of Italy, took their capital, Mediolanum, establishing a new province - Cisalpine Gaul, and founded the colonies of Cremona, Modena and Placentia, connected with Rome by the famous Via Flaminia. In the same period, the popular tribune Flaminius promulgated a law providing land allotments to all of Rome's poorest citizens; with his support, the Claudian law was passed forbidding senators and their sons to possess merchant ships capable of carrying more than 300 amphoras, i. e., 80 hectolitres. These laws suited not only the plebs but also big businessmen among Romans and Italics, as they got rid of the competition on the part of the senatorial order, the richest of them all. The democratic reform of the *comitia centuriata* was also in the interests of the plebs; 373 centuries were formed instead of the former 193, and the proportion of the centuries of the equites and first class citizens to the rest of the centuries changed drastically - 88 to 258 instead of the former 98 to 95.

Despite internal democratisation, Roman foreign policy was basically one of support for the aristocracy of all the tribes and peoples with whom they came in contact. Thus the Romans helped the aristocracy of the Etruscan city of Volsinii to suppress an uprising of the enslaved population.

In the meantime, Hamilcar moved to Spain and, supported by Carthaginian colonies and some local kings and chieftains, made his way across the peninsula, ruthlessly suppressing any resistance. In 229 he fell in action, and the army was headed by his son-in-law Hasdrubal, who founded the city of Carthago Nova, or Cartagena, which soon became a major

centre owing to the rich silver mines in its vicinity. When Hasdrubal was assassinated by a Celt slave, he was succeeded by Hamilcar's son Hannibal. Hannibal persistently gathered men and money, hoping to avenge the defeat in the First Punic War. The pretext for the war was Hannibal's destruction of the Greek colony of Saguntum, Rome's ally, south of the Ebro. Hannibal placed his hopes on an alliance with the Gauls and the secession of Roman allies in Italy; he also planned to form an alliance with king Philip V of Macedonia, who feared the strengthening of Roman influence in the Adriatic. He failed to take into account, however, that the ruling circles of most Italian cities were already closely linked with Rome and had a vested interest in its support and naval supremacy. As for the Roman and Latin citizens of the colonies, they were ready to defend their land to the last.

The beginning of the war was exceptionally propitious for Hannibal. His great military talent and skill, and the differences between the Roman people and the Senate on the tactics to be employed in the war, brought him victories over the Romans in the battles near the Ticino river, the Trebia river, Lake Trasimene and especially in the battle of Cannae, where 50,000 Romans were slain. This seemed to make the Roman position hopeless, but Rome again recovered. Various measures were taken, beginning with numerous religious ceremonies intended to ensure the assistance of the gods and the cohesion of the people, and ending with calling up slaves for service in the army—a measure that appeared desperate to later Roman historians, as slaves were strictly forbidden to serve in the army. After the Cannae defeat, the Samnites, the Lucani and the Bruttii, who had not yet been Romanised deep enough, rose against Rome. Capua, Rome's old rival, took the side of the Carthaginians (except for the aristocracy, which remained loyal to Rome) and effectively helped Hannibal. But the Greek cities and most allies remained loyal to Rome, as did Roman and Latin colonies. True, Hannibal managed to take Tarentum, Metapontum and Heraclea, and concluded an alliance with king Hiero of Syracuse, but the tide of war had definitely turned against Carthage. Commanded by Fabius Maximus, nicknamed Cunctator ("The Laggard"), the Romans adopted the tactics of skirmishing and avoiding decisive battles. They resorted not only to military but

also to diplomatic moves. In Greece, the Romans knocked together an anti-Macedonian coalition. Philip was forced to conclude peace with Rome. After two years of siege, in 212, Syracuse was taken by Marcellus with the aid of the local aristocracy after a tunnel was dug leading into the city. Capua also fell. One by one, the Greek cities captured by Hannibal were won back. As a result, the whole of Sicily became a Roman province, while Capua was harshly punished, deprived of its lands (now added to Roman public lands) and of its status as a city. In 210, an army was sent to Spain headed by 26-year-old Publius Cornelius Scipio, later nicknamed "Africanus". Disembarking at the Greek city of Emporion, an ally of Rome, Scipio showed exceptional military talent, seizing Cartagena by a sudden assault the following year and capturing an enormous booty. A number of Iberian and Celtic tribes went over to his side. In 206, he forced the Carthaginians to leave Spain, which then became a Roman province. In 204, setting forth with his army from the Sicilian harbour of Lilybaeum, he disembarked in Africa, where he concluded an alliance with Masinissa, king of Numidia and an enemy of Carthage. Recalled from Italy, Hannibal fought Scipio's army near the city of Zama Regia, was roundly defeated and escaped to king Antiochus III of Syria. Much later, meeting Hannibal at that king's court, Scipio is said to have asked Hannibal whom he believed to be the greatest general. Hannibal placed Alexander the Great first, himself second, and Scipio third. Amazed, Scipio asked Hannibal why the latter believed himself greater than he, Scipio, after a defeat at his hands. Hannibal replied, "Had I defeated you, I would have been greater than Alexander."

The Second Punic War ended in a complete triumph for Rome. Under the terms of the peace treaty, the Carthaginians had to pay an indemnity of 600 million denarii in 50 years, and to hand over to the Romans their elephants and all but ten warships, they would also have no right to wage wars without the consent of Rome. Masinissa's right to most of Numidia was confirmed. Roman victory had been won at a very high cost. According to modern computations, it cost them 200 million denarii—three times as much as the First Punic War. Hannibal destroyed about 400 settlements in the lands of Roman allies. During the war, when the Romans



had to maintain 36 legions and 150 warships, the prices grew skyhigh. Many lands in Apulia and Lucania were abandoned and became pastures, although part of them was distributed among Scipio's veterans.

Hannibal's supporters were harshly punished. 32,000 Tarentians were sold into slavery; the Bruttii were made state slaves; 40,000 Ligurians, who had taken the Carthaginians' part, were driven from northern Italy to the Beneventum area. The colonies of Lucca, Bononia and Aquileia were founded in northern Italy, and the lands of the rural and tribal communities of those areas were added to the Roman public lands, which increased to 55,000 square kilometres. They were open to occupation for a rental of one-tenth of the cereal crops, one-fifth of fruit gathered, and a tax on grazing land. Colonies were founded in other areas, too. Colonists received from 5 to 50 *jugera*, and commanders in veterans' colonies got as much as 100 to 140 *jugera*. Land-surveying went on all over Italy, and roads, bridges and cities were built. Colonisation and resettlement of the population stimulated the Romanisation of Italy, the spreading of Roman technology and of the Latin language, and the organisation of cities after the Roman model, with elected magistrates and senates.

New sources of enrichment appeared. In the absence of a state mechanism, a system of tax-farming was introduced; collecting taxes in the provinces and rentals from the public lands, construction work, and exploitation of Spanish silver mines, where more than 40,000 slaves were employed, were handed over to *publicani*. As all these enterprises required great capital investment and were thus beyond the means of individual *publicani* (e. g., the exploitation of the Spanish mines required 26 million denarii for buying slaves, five million a year for their upkeep, and 10 million in payments to the Roman treasury), the *publicani* and contractors set up companies which also included men of very modest means who later received dividends on their investments. Judging from Polybius's account, nearly the whole of the Roman people was a kind of limited company exploiting the provinces and Italy itself. As a result, the Roman economy not only recovered but also made rapid progress. Middle as well as major entrepreneurs were getting richer on dividends from capital they mostly invested in the

buying of private or occupation of public lands, as agriculture was traditionally the most prestigious source of income. To be a city magistrate, a person had to own real estate. Thus, according to a statute of the city of Tarentum (dating, however, from later times), only a person owning a house on city territory covered with not less than 1,500 tiles (a tile measured 0.65 by 0.45 metre) could be a magistrate. Men of substance bought estates or villas in different areas of Italy. The growth of urban population created a market for agricultural produce. The chase after profit became universal.

The demand for money, which was invested in various enterprises, stimulated usury. The interest rates paid by Roman citizens were limited by law, but usurers found ways to circumvent that law, lending money to front men who had no Roman citizenship; in the provinces, the interest rates reached 48 per cent per annum. Usurers grew fabulously rich.

As a result of all these processes, medium-sized villas (100 to 250 *jugera*) and large tracts of grazing land became widespread throughout Italy. The former produced grain, wine, olives, fruit, and vegetables; the latter, meat, milk, and wool that was spun, woven and dyed by artisans in the cities. A single family and a few slaves no longer sufficed to run such an estate. More manpower was needed. As we have mentioned already, in a civic community such manpower could not be recruited among exploited compatriots, and the only way out was to increase the number of slaves born on the estate or bought during sales of war prisoners. That period marked the beginning of extremely rapid development of the antique slave-owning mode of production, which soon reached its peak. Slaves and slave-owners became the two principal antagonistic classes of society.

A villa with 10 to 15 slaves was described by Cato in his treatise on agriculture. He had it all worked out in great detail – the size and the organisation of the labour force, the division of labour (still rather primitive), the meagre rations of the slaves, which depended on their skills and capacity for work, the production quotas, the duties of the *villicus*, the villa manager, the conditions of hiring extra hands during harvest or construction workers, the advantages of buying various tools in different cities. Cato's villa, selling its agricultural produce on the market, is often seen as a sort of analogue of a capitalist

enterprise and evidence of the birth of capitalism in Rome. We believe, however, that Cato's treatise clearly shows the difference between simple commodity production in some branches of the Roman economy and capitalist production. Accumulation rather than acceleration of capital turnover and expanded reproduction was its prime purpose. A good master, Cato taught, must not buy—he must sell. An estate owner did his best to produce everything that he could on his estate. Hoarding treasures that might come in handy at a time of need or be expended on ostentatious display of wealth or on public needs was the owner's principal goal. Such a villa could hardly have been highly profitable—the profits of *publicani*, sea traders and usurers must have been much higher. But slave-owners' villas had a number of advantages over small-scale peasant holdings. They practised simple cooperation and division of labour, which increased labour productivity, and they were also able to buy better implements, like ploughs, presses for olives and grapes, etc., all of which brought an upsurge in Italic agriculture. Slaves were also used in artisans' shops, though not on the same scale as in agriculture. Slaves' marks alongside of free craftsmen's occur on pottery, tiles and bricks.

The growing role of slaves in production affected their position. Once, they had been to some extent responsible for their acts and could even be guarantors in bargains; they had participated in acts of worship (in household cults), while now they were equated with cattle by the *lex Aquilia* (its precise date is unknown): damage done by a slave was the responsibility of the master, who paid for it as if it had been done by a quadruped—by handing over the culprit to the injured party or by paying a fine. The master was responsible for robbery, theft, or murder committed by a slave at the master's bidding, for the slave could not disobey the master for fear of punishment. The master or the *villicus* (steward and overseer of an estate) made a sacrifice to the Lares on behalf of the entire family, and ordinary slaves took no part in the rite. Kinship among slaves was not recognised; a slave could only have a concubine, not a wife, and it was accepted that a slave had no father. In Cato's view, a slave must work so much as to be unable to think of anything but sleep. Although each landowner knew that his well-being depended on the fitness of his cattle and his slaves,

and kept them accordingly, the slave's human personality was entirely suppressed. The position of slaves in the cities was somewhat better; here, the master sometimes gave them some small property, the so-called *peculium*, that helped them to save money with which to buy their freedom and with it, Roman citizenship. Urban slaves mixed with free plebeians and attended spectacles, but here, too, they were despised. It was taken for granted that a slave was a thief, a scoundrel and a cheat. To quote a line from a contemporary comedy: if a slave does not lie, that is not unlike a miraculous omen. Although Romans often let their trusted slaves into private and political intrigues, and slaves had entry into all spheres of society, they remained outsiders in it. To be suspected of a slave's vices was a terrible disgrace for a freeborn person. The development of slavery largely determined the subsequent history of Rome and, with the spreading of slavery throughout the provinces, of the Roman republic as a whole.

The advantages Rome derived from the wars with Carthage, incited it to further expansion east and west, where new lands promised new profit. Although wars demanded considerable financial outlay (10 legions, 100 warships and 400 transport ships had to be permanently maintained), all members of the "limited company" in the above sense had at first a vested interest in them. Both in the east and in the west the Romans succeeded best when they could play on their opponents' external and domestic conflicts, supporting one state in the fight against another or the aristocracy against the commons. They had great difficulty in conquering tribes with little social differentiation. Vegetius, an author of a treatise on military art who lived in the 4th century A.D. and drew on a thousand years of Roman military experience, wrote that even the smallest people cannot be conquered if it is not torn by inner strife.

In the east, directly after the victory near Zama the Romans interfered in the affairs of the Hellenistic states, demanding that Philip V should stop waging war on Rhodes, Pergamum and other Greek cities that had appealed to Rome for help. Winning over to their side the Illyrians, the Achaean and the Aetolian Leagues, the Romans, commanded by Titus Quinctius Flamininus, defeated Philip. In the following year, Flamininus solemnly declared freedom for the Greek cities during the Isthmian Games,

and was deified by the Greeks. A temple was built in his honour. Flamininus brought to his triumph in Rome the booty he had won in Greece: 18,270 pounds of silver, 3,714 pounds of gold, 14,514 gold and 80,000 silver coins, 114 gold wreathes given him by the Greek cities, and numerous works of art.

Soon after the end of the war with Philip, the war with Antiochus III began, this time in alliance with Macedonia, and in 189 B. C. Antiochus was defeated near Magnesia. In 168, Perseus, Philip V's heir, was defeated. Seventy settlements were destroyed and 150,000 inhabitants were sold into slavery in Epirus, which had joined Perseus.

The "freedom" which the Romans had given to the Greek cities proved rather illusory, and the dominion of the pro-Roman oligarchy in the cities, exceedingly onerous. When Andriscus, who claimed to be Perseus's son, led an uprising in Macedonia, many Greek cities joined him. In 148, the Romans suppressed the revolt and made Macedonia, Epirus and Illyria their provinces. In 146, Mummius crushed the democratic regime that had been established in the Achaean League, and destroyed Corinth, seizing a great number of slaves and objects of art as his booty. Only Athens, Sparta and Delphi retained their freedom, while all the other Greek cities were subordinated to the governor of Macedonia. Finally, in that same year 146 B. C., after the short Third Punic War begun by the Romans out of fear of Carthage's revival, Scipio Aemilianus, grandson of Scipio Africanus, destroyed Carthage, cursing the very land on which Rome's great rival had stood. Carthage's possessions became the Roman province of Africa. Soon after, Attalus of Pergamum, Rome's sincere friend, left his kingdom as a legacy to Rome, and it formed the province of Asia.

In the west, the Romans encountered the greatest difficulties in Spain, which was finally subdued only after 200 years of struggle. Several uprisings in the early 2nd century B. C. in the south and south-east of the peninsula, where the Romans relied on the urban and tribal aristocracy were rather quickly suppressed, but the tribes of the Celtiberians and the Lusitanians, who lived on the territory of modern Portugal, put up a stiff resistance. The Spanish wars cost the Romans great losses, the soldiers unaccustomed to the climate died of exposure, discipline declined, and no one wanted to serve there.

The conquests of the 2nd century B. C. brought

about a decisive change in all spheres of Roman life. Despite the great military spending, the profit in booty and taxes was so vast (some 2,000 tons of silver were brought to Rome between 200 and 150 B. C.) that in the 170s the government no longer needed to resort to the *tributum*. New market-places specialising in the sale of cattle, vegetables, fish and meat were built in Rome. Objects of luxury—delicacies, fine clothes, ornaments, fine-looking and well-trained servants—became highly fashionable. Well-to-do citizens were rebuilding their modest houses. New public buildings—circuses and temples—were erected in the cities. Laws against luxury promulgated several times (not less than six), whose purpose was to reduce inequality among citizens and the outflow of precious metals to Greece and Asia, the sources of imported luxury goods, were ineffectual. At the same time, an increasingly narrow circle of Romans—mostly generals, governors, and *publicani*—profited from the conquests, while ordinary citizens gained less and less.

The socio-political structure of Roman society changed, too. The nobility, which monopolised the magistracies, became established; senators no longer served in cavalry; and the second privileged order, that of the equites, evolved. This order included persons of noble origin (sons of senators or knights) who owned not less than 400,000 sester tia and participated in no less than ten campaigns as cavalrymen. Military tribunes, and prominent citizens of Italic cities were sometimes included among the equites. Many of them had large tracts of land in Italy and the provinces, invested money in usury and commerce, and played a leading role in *publicani*'s companies. There were orators and prominent lawyers among them.

Although the equites and the senators belonged to the same class of big property owners, and as often as not to the same aristocratic family, they competed with one another over the offices of *publicani* or governors of provinces which offered considerable opportunities for enrichment through exploitation or direct plunder. The office of governor was so profitable that it was said that when a governor went out to his province, he was poor and it was rich, and when he returned to Rome, he was rich and the province was poor. The offices of consul and praetor, which opened the way to governorship, became more and more desirable. All sorts of manoeuvres

were resorted to during elections—secret pre-election agreements, agitation, bribes, and discrimination of rivals. Laws against abuses during election campaigns (of which not less than 12 were passed) were unavailing. In 149, special senatorial courts were set up to try cases of violation of these laws and consider accusations of abuses in the provinces, but the judges of these courts were not as harsh as they used to be in the times of the laws of XII Tablets. The penalties did not go beyond fines or banishment from Rome at the most. Besides, the senators were inclined to acquit members of their own order and condemn the equites.

Differentiation among the plebeians increased, too. The rural plebs, which frequently had to interrupt its peaceful pursuits because of the constant wars, and suffered from the competition of the more profitable slave-owners' villas as well as from forcible seizure of lands by rich neighbours who armed their slaves, lost its allotments and was brought to ruin. The peasants' ruin undermined the fighting effectiveness of the Roman army despite the fact that the property qualifications for the conscripts were lowered several times. Discipline in the army declined. It grew more and more difficult to recruit soldiers.

The urban plebs, whose numbers swelled as more impoverished peasants came to the city and more slaves were freed, was mostly employed in the crafts, petty trade, and construction work; it had little interest for land, being mostly concerned with cheaper foodstuffs, lower rent, and more orders for the artisans and contractors that meant steady employment for them. Of great importance for the entire plebs was winning greater powers for the popular assembly and tribunes of the people, the two institutions that curbed the power of the magistrates and the nobility. This became especially important in view of extreme rise in debts owed to big property-owners and usurers by the plebs and other sections of the population. The senators needed money for pomp, for election campaigns, and sops to their numerous clients who supported them in the popular assembly. The peasants needed money to better their position after crop failure or murrain, to buy labour implements, and to equip their sons for service in the army. The urban plebs needed money to start workshops, to buy food and pay rent. But possibilities for getting money were limited, except for *publicani* and usurers. The difficulty and expense of overland

transportation adversely affected the markets of both agriculture and the crafts. Transportation by sea was cheaper and promised great profit in case of success, but it required considerable capital outlay, and the risk factor was rather great, as ships might founder, be seized by pirates, etc. The law therefore did not restrict the interest rates on credit to finance sea trade, as the creditor shared the risk.

Borrowing money often resulted in loss of property, which meant expulsion from the higher order or census class for the privileged, while for the plebeians, especially rural ones, it meant debtor servitude, which was restored in circumvention of the *lex Petelia*.

Great changes had also been brought about in the culture of Roman society and its ideology by the internal processes and Rome's altered international position.

Opposition to Rome was very strong in the conquered countries. In Asia, it was prophesied that Rome would soon fall, the Romans would be made slaves and would have to atone twentyfold for the evil they had done. Romans were said to be so bloodthirsty that, not content with wars and the increasingly fashionable gladiator shows, they hired men who killed each other during their feasts, and they were said to be so vain that they were followed by a retinue of 20,000 slaves whenever they left their house. Fawning on the Romans in public, the Greeks secretly despised them and believed them to be barbarians. The most farsighted of the Roman politicians, amongst whom the Scipios and their circle (the so-called Philhellenes) played the leading role, realised that such a reputation was detrimental to Roman diplomacy, which was no less important in asserting their domination than weapons. They began to study intensely the Greek language, Greek literature and philosophy, paying enormous sums of money for educated Greek slaves to teach their children (it is a well-attested fact, for instance, that the Greek grammarian Daphnides was bought for 700,000 sesterces, whereas an ordinary slave cost about 2,000). Many of these slaves later became freedmen and gained fame as rhetoricians, grammarians and writers, or opened schools where children of the plebeians were educated. Literacy became widespread among the people and even among slaves. Rich people began to send their sons to Athens, Ephesus and other cities of Greece and

Asia Minor to listen to lectures by famous orators and philosophers. Some of these moved to Rome; thus the historian Polybius and the Stoics Panaitios and Posedonios were warmly received in the Philhellenes' circle. Educated Romans were familiar with the principal schools in Greek philosophy. Stoicism became popular among the aristocracy, while the middle strata were more inclined towards Epicureanism.

The art of oratory, which was particularly necessary for success in the popular assembly and the courts, made great advances. The ability to be persuasive assumed a knowledge of human psychology. One school of oratory even insisted that the skill of rousing the listeners' emotions was more important than a knowledge of law and custom. Attention to the psychology of persons of different sex, age, and status became a distinguishing trait of Roman esthetic theories and Roman art. Roman nobles, who began to write a history of Rome in Greek, aimed in part at their readers' psychology, hoping to persuade the Greeks that the Romans' victories and their right to rule the world were rooted in their exceptional virtues. But the Roman virtues did not inspire much confidence among the vanquished. The Greek Polybius, who was close to the Scipios' circle, approached the problem in a different fashion. Taking into account the Greeks' interest in the problem of ideal political order, he wrote the *Universal History*—a history of Roman victories intended to prove that these victories stemmed from and were justified by Rome's perfect political system. Rome was the only state that proved able to combine the advantages of monarchy (as represented by the magistrates), aristocracy (represented by the Senate) and democracy (represented by the popular assembly). An ideal political system uniting all citizens and ensuring everyone's proper rights, provided they performed their duties, made Rome invincible and capable of founding a great state and of ruling it for the benefit of its people. Polybius's theory, along with the Romans' confidence in their mission to rule the world, intended for them from the beginning by destiny and the gods, formed the basis of Roman political thought and later of the official ideology of the Roman empire.

During the Second Punic War, to inspire hope for divine intervention among the citizenry, and to achieve closer unity with their allies from Greek

cities by stressing the common origin of the Greeks and Aeneas's descendants, the Romans, the Senate commenced to include in the Roman pantheon some foreign gods—Venus Erucina, so called after her famous temple on Mt Eryx (Erice) in Sicily; Cybele, the Great Mother of Gods worshipped on Mt Ida in Pergamum; and somewhat later Aesculapius, the god of doctoring. The Saturnalia, the festivities in honour of the god Saturn, were now organised after the model of the Greek Kronia and intended to remind the people of the Golden Age of plenty and freedom. The masters offered food and drink to their slaves, who took part in the noisy, carnival-style merry-making along with free men. Various new games in honour of the gods were initiated. In 265, during the funeral of the former dictator Junius Pera, his grandsons replaced the custom of killing captives, as part of the ceremony during funerals of highborn citizens, by fights among these captives. That was the beginning of gladiatorial fights, which were soon moved to the circus and enjoyed great popularity among all sections of the population. Stage plays, after the Greek model, were also introduced in Rome, and a whole constellation of playwrights immediately appeared. As a rule, they took Greek tragedies and comedies as their material, adapting them to the Roman public's taste. Mere fragments of their countless works have survived, and only the works of Plautus and Terence have been fully preserved. Terence (190-150 B. C.) was a freedman, accepted, despite his past, in the Scipionic circle. His comedies, copying Greek models, written in refined language and full of moral dicta, bored the general public, while the comedies of Plautus (254-184 B. C.), who came from the lowest strata of the plebs, were extremely popular. He also took the plots of Greek comedies as his starting point, but he filled them with numerous details borrowed from Roman folklore, everyday life, or court cases, and with funny jokes. The principal character in most of his plays was a slave—dodgy, cunning and resourceful. With his inexhaustible supply of tricks, he helped the son of his master, a stingy grumbler, to make the father part with the money the youth needed to buy the freedom of his beloved, a pimp's slave (who in the end proved to be a freeborn maid whom the young man could marry). Plautus's comedies showed the spectators a whole range of types they knew so well—citizens of modest means preoc-



cupied with their villas and commerce, boastful soldiers, shrewish wives, toadies, swaggering major-domo slaves, etc. Each actor had to wear a costume and wig suitable to his character during the performance, which was accompanied by flute-playing. The actors, recruited among the common people, freedmen, and slaves (the actor's craft deprived the man who practised it of a citizen's honour), as well as the musicians and the playwrights, were organised in colleges attached to the Apollo temple. Plays about life in Rome (the so-called *togatae*, as distinct from the Greek *palliatae*) were also produced. The rule was that a slave could be cleverer than his master in comedies about Greek life but not in the *togatae*. A genre of comedies arose on the Italic soil that were called *atellanae* (from Atella, a city in Campania), with a set of masks (the Fool, the Glutton, the Scoundrel, the Stinger, the Gossip), but not even fragments of these comedies have survived.

Next to Plautus and Terence, their older contemporary, Livius Andronicus, born in Tarentum, made into a slave and then freed, also enjoyed great renown. He was the first to begin writing plays, and he also translated the *Odyssey* into Latin. Naevius, a Roman citizen and veteran of the First Punic War, wrote besides comedies, an epic poem about that war, starting from Aeneas's wanderings. Although only fragments of that work have survived, it can be assumed to have expressed the idea of Rome's great mission and to have praised the virtues of the Romans. Ennius, a citizen of the Calabrian town near Brindisium, sang the praises of the Roman aristocracy in works of extreme diversity—he wrote many tragedies, the *Annals* (a patriotic history of Rome in verse), and translated Euhemerus's *Sacred History*, which endeavoured to prove that the gods were ancient kings and heroes deified for their deeds. The poet Lucilius, who came from an aristocratic family and was close to the Philhellenes, wrote satires on various themes; thus he described, in jocular style, a council of the gods convened by Jupiter to decide on punishment for a certain unworthy Roman. In Plautus's comedy *Amphitryon*, Jupiter appeared as Amphitryon, the husband of Alcmene, the future mother of Hercules, in order to get into her bedroom, while Mercury assumed the guise of Amphitryon's slave Sossius, which led to all sorts of funny situations in which the gods appeared ridiculous—something quite incompatible with the

Romans' traditional solemn attitude towards the gods. Those were the first cracks in the attitude of the Roman community to the religion of their ancestors, if not in the whole of Roman ideology.

Acquaintanceship with the *Odyssey* in Livius Andronicus's translation and with statues and pictures brought from Greece and Asia Minor and placed in temples and squares made a decisive impact not only on the Philhellenes but also on all Romans. The Greek gods, given Latin names by Roman poets and playwrights (thus, Zeus became Jupiter; Hera, Juno; Athena, Minerva; Aphrodite, Venus; Demeter, Ceres; Cronos, Saturn, etc.), were identified with Roman gods and linked with Greek myths, which were already well known to the spectators of tragedies.

The poets and playwrights who wrote at the end of the 3rd and the 2nd centuries were mostly clients of aristocratic families and did their best to glorify their patrons and the ancestry of their patrons. Thus Scipio Africanus was said to have been the son of none other than Jupiter. Ennius dedicated to him verses that were full of rapturous praise. Roman generals became patrons of many provincial cities and tribes, which built temples in their honour (e. g., the temple of Flamininus). Contempt for the common people became widespread among the upper strata. Lucilius defined virtues as science or knowledge that was only accessible to an educated person. This view, adopted by the privileged strata, was later expressed in the brief maxim: virtue is wisdom, of which the plebs has none.

The growing strength of the nobility incited a reaction among the higher strata as well as among the plebs. The opposition took various forms, including resistance against Hellenic culture spread by the Philhellenes. This resistance was led by Cato, one of the few plebeians who became a consul and a censor. He was famous among the plebeians as an inflexible guardian of the "customs of the ancestors". His personal and political rivalry with the Scipios was aggravated, particularly during his censorship, by his campaign against foreign excesses—luxury, effeminacy, laziness, swagger, profit-seeking and a penchant for fame. The Greeks, Cato wrote, boasted of their heroes, while Rome's greatness had been built by all Romans, who demanded no reward other than recognition of their deserts by the compatriots. The citizens' stern virtue, courage, and modesty had



brought glory to Rome. Cato's statue with a grateful inscription was erected, at the people's expense, in the temple of Salus, the goddess of Salvation. Cato was particularly hostile to Greek philosophy and rhetoric. When the philosopher Carneades, who arrived with a Greek embassy, made a speech praising justice, so highly valued by the Romans, and on the next day, another speech proving that there was no justice whatever in the world, and, if there had been, the Romans would have had to give up all their conquered lands, Cato hastily expelled him from Rome that he might not corrupt Roman youth. Later, the issue of justice became a burning one for Rome. Cicero, who spent a great deal of effort on reconciling what is useful with that which is just and noble, finally found the solution, announcing that usefulness and justice coincided when peoples or individuals incapable of making reasonable use of their freedom were subordinated to others. Some senators supported Cato's fight against foreign influences and innovations. Thus, when a man who owned land on the Janiculum announced in 181 that he had dug up Numa's tomb and the books he had written, expounding Pythagoras's philosophy, the Senate issued an order to burn those books.

The spreading of "foreign excesses", stimulated by objective changes in the life of society, could not be stopped by agitation or forcible measures. By no means all elements of Greek culture were assimilated, though. For instance, the Sophists' idea that the strong had the right to trample laws and morality, placing himself beyond good and evil, was never absorbed, as it was incompatible with the traditional Roman respect for the good of all. Neither was there any interest for Utopian theories, so popular in Greece, as the Romans believed that the ideal social structure had already been implemented in the Roman republic. The Romans accepted the Greek cults only to the extent to which they did not violate ancient morality. The cult of Dionysus, identified with the Italic Liber, was permitted, but without the nocturnal orgies, the bacchanalia, banned by a special *senatus consultum*.

Roman law, which always played a significant role in Roman society, developed on an independent basis. Compared with the laws of the XII Tablets, it had grown quite complex, as had Roman society itself. A special praetor was appointed to try cases of litigation between citizens and non-citizens, or the

peregrines. On coming into office, city praetors published edicts defining their intentions in solving cases of certain types, and the so-called *interdicta*, mostly aimed at defending possession of property. All these documents, together with *senatus consulta*, plebiscites, magistrates' instructions and decisions of judges constituting the precedents, made law extremely complex and chaotic, in Cicero's words. A knowledge of law, along with the art of rhetoric, was one of the few ways of achieving eminence for those who, like Cicero, came from the lower classes. There emerged a theory of the rights of peoples, natural law, and civil law (which only applied to Roman citizens, regulating the relations between them), of the difference between natural justice and formal application of literally interpreted law which might result in "supreme injustice". All this accorded with purely Roman ideas and needs. On the purely theoretical plane, the Epicurean interpretation of law as a result of "social contract" was borrowed from the Greeks, and so was the Stoic one identifying the law of the city with that of the universe, the "supreme reason of the divinity".

*The First Stage of the Civil Wars.* Conflicts between the different social strata of Roman society became particularly exacerbated when slaves' resistance began to assume extremely dangerous forms due to the intensification of their exploitation by big property-owners, and their degradation to the state of beasts of burden from their former position of members of the family in which two or three slaves worked together with the master and took part in the Lares cult. In the early 2nd century B.C., there were several outbreaks of unrest among Carthaginians sold into slavery. In the 180s, the slave herdsmen of Apulia revolted. These movements were quickly suppressed, but the uprising of slaves in Sicily, begun in 138, posed a real threat to slave-owners. The landowners of that province, fleeced by Roman governors and *publicani*, tried to recover their losses by harsh exploitation of their numerous slaves, most of whom came from Syria and Asia Minor. Besides, there were not only major landowners but also quite a few very poor peasants there, who owned plots of one *jugerum* only. In the cities, numerous slaves toiled in artisans' workshops that exported their products. Driven to despair, the slaves rose in revolt; they were

led by the Syrian Eunus (who was regarded as a prophet and elected king under the name of Antiochus) and the Cilician Cleo, who joined his force with that of Eunus. The cities of Enna and Tauromenium became the centres of the uprising. The numbers of the insurgents swelled as they were joined by peasants. The Roman armies sent against Eunus and Cleo suffered one defeat after another. They managed to take Enna and Tauromenium only in 132, largely because of treason. Almost simultaneously with that uprising began the revolt in Pergamum headed by Aristonicus, a pretender to the Pergamum throne. He was joined by all opponents of the passage of Pergamum under Roman domination. Slaves and impoverished free citizens, who dreamed of founding the just state of the Heliopolites, or worshippers of the sun-god, Helios, were the prime force of the uprising. Slaves also rebelled on Delos, Chios and in Attica. The uprisings were only suppressed at a great cost.

Slaves' uprisings and the fall of the Roman army's fighting efficiency threatened the stability of Roman power. Shrewd politicians realised the need for reforms that might revive the peasant army and unite the citizenry. One of these politicians was Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, a man of noble extraction, Scipio Africanus's grandson on the maternal side, a disciple of the Greek philosopher Blossius, and a veteran of the Third Punic and of the Spanish wars in which he saw for himself the sad state of the Roman army. Elected a tribune of the people in 133, he proposed a bill restricting public land that could be occupied by citizens to 500 *jugera* (plus 250 *jugera* for each of two grownup sons); the surplus would be distributed among the poor in holdings of 30 *jugera*. The proposed law was in fact in line with the traditional recognition of the civic community's supreme ownership of land and its right to dispose of it, but it was fiercely resisted by the great majority of big landowners, who persuaded Tiberius's colleague, the tribune M. Octavius, to veto the bill. Tiberius then asked the popular assembly if someone acting against the people's interest could be a tribune of the people. The assembly, attended by masses of peasants, divested Octavius of power, which was an unheard-of violation of the Roman tradition that did not permit an elected official to be recalled before his mandate expired, and voted for Tiberius's bill. A committee of three was elected for

the implementation of the law – Tiberius himself, his father-in-law Appius Claudius Pulcher, and his brother Gaius. Tiberius proposed to use the treasury of Pergamum to supply the peasants receiving land with everything they would need for work, which ran counter to the interests of the *publicani* and big landowners. When Tiberius announced his intention to run for the tribunate for the second year in succession (which also contravened the tradition), his opponents, mobilising all their forces, began an intense campaign against him, accusing him of royal pretensions. On the day of voting, they brought all their supporters and clients to the popular assembly. It all ended in a massacre, during which Tiberius and 300 his followers were killed.

His law was implemented very slowly in the face of desperate resistance of the owners of occupied lands (*possessores*). Scipio Aemilianus, who lent his authority to the opposition, proposed that the disputes arising in the implementation of the law should be considered by the Senate, which naturally slowed down the process. Soon Scipio Aemilianus was found dead in his bedroom, and the adherents of the reform were immediately accused of secret assassination of the famous hero. The affair was complicated by unrest among the Italic allies, who insisted that they had not been fairly compensated for the burden of the wars which they had shared with the Romans. They also demanded Roman citizenship for themselves, in order to gain access to land and all those rights and freedoms which Roman citizens enjoyed. A rejection of their demands caused an uprising in Asculum. The revolt was crushed, but the problem of the allies became a constant worry for the Romans.

In 124, Gaius Gracchus was elected tribune of the people. He saw himself as his brother's successor, but, not content with merely repeating his agrarian law, he wanted to build a broad front of the various social strata opposed to the Senate. He promulgated the so-called *lex frumentaria* (corn law), which benefited the urban plebs; by that law, poor plebeians were allowed to buy 60 modia of wheat at a reduced price (6.3 asses per modius). A new road-building project was intended to give employment to contractors and workers. The law proposing to farm out the tithe in the new province of Asia, and another on the participation of the equites in the courts, benefited the *publicani* and the equestrian order. The peasants'

interests were to be met by a law limiting military service to 17 years, providing them with arms at state expense, and extending the right of appeal to the popular assembly to include soldiers, to curb the abuses of commanders. Besides, Gaius proposed to found colonies for 6,000 in Capua, Tarentum and Carthage, giving each colonist a land allotment of 200 *jugera*. Finally, he proposed to grant Roman citizenship to the allies. But this last suggestion was intensely disliked by the Roman plebs which did not want to share its rights and privileges with the Italics. The opposition again raised its head and started an agitation against Gaius. He was accused of neglect for the curse on the land of Carthage. At a popular assembly convened to discuss this issue, fighting broke out between Gaius's followers and his opponents. In the end, the former occupied the Aventine, but the consul Opimius, granted extraordinary powers, led his supporters and a mercenary unit, the Cretan archers, against them. Three thousand Gracchans were killed, and Gaius himself committed suicide. Later, Cicero accused the Gracchi of being the initiators of civil wars that lasted a hundred years, and of inciting the people's unruliness. In his work on oratory he gave a list of arguments counsel for the defence could use to justify assassination, citing Opimius as one of the examples: in killing Gaius Gracchus, the latter saved the republic. The people, however, revered the memory of the Gracchi.

The Gracchi reforms were to some extent neutralised. In 119 B. C., the agrarian commission was dissolved (though it had granted land allotments to some 50 or 75 thousand families), and according to the law of 111, both land received from the commission and land occupied in Italy and the provinces, regardless of the size of the holding, was declared private, i. e., rent-free and not subject to redistribution. The *lex frumentaria* and the law on courts remained in force, and the participation of the equites in the courts made court trials an especially sharp weapon in the hands of the conflicting groups.

New conquests in Gaul, where the Allobrogi tribe was subdued and a new province, of which Tolosa was the capital, established, as well as the founding of the Narbo colony and of two colonies on the Balearic Islands, provided more lands for the peasants and satisfied the businessmen. For a while, peace was restored, but it did not last long, as the

most acute issues remained. It was, in fact, impossible to restore the Roman community of peasants and warriors (which was the Gracchi's ultimate aim) under the conditions of developing commodity-money relations, slavery, increasing social differentiation, and economic inequality.

The war with Jugurtha, a pretender to the Numidian throne, which began in 111 B. C., showed the extent of the corruption of the Roman army and its command. The soldiers cared for nothing but the booty. The commanders, including Opimius, the murderer of Gaius Gracchus, bribed by Jugurtha, lost battles to him. During that war, which was a disgrace to Rome, two men rose to prominence, Marius and Sulla, who were destined to play an enormous role in the fate of the republic.

Gaius Marius came from a small village near the city of Arpinum; he began his military career in Spain, under Caecilius Metellus, the patron of Marius's father. Metellus's patronage, Marius's courage, and later his marriage to a woman of noble birth (Julius Caesar's aunt) helped Marius in his career that was exceptional for a person of humble birth. Rising from one magistracy to another, he was finally elected consul in 107 and carried out an important military reform. Now everyone could join the army regardless of their property qualifications; apart from salary and part of the booty, soldiers received a land allotment on retirement after 16 to 20 years of service. The agrarian question was now shifted to quite a different plane: land allotments were now a prize for the indigent plebeians serving in the army, and the army could fight for its interests much more effectively than the popular assembly. The veterans now expected their land allotments to come from their commander, who was, as it were, obliged to provide them, and not from the Roman people. The ties between the civic community and the soldiers weakened, while their links with the supreme commander grew stronger. He protected their interests in the government, and they supported him with their votes and, if peaceful means were inadequate, with their arms.

Another traditional mainstay of the life of the Roman civic community, the inalienable link between the concepts of "warrior" and "citizen", was also broke; not all citizens were now obliged to be warriors. All this signified the beginning crisis of Rome as a civic community. It could no longer

remain such a community, as it had become the centre of an enormous state where conflicts were rife between slaves and slave-owners, big and small landowners, Senate and plebs, citizens and Italics, Italics and provincials, and in the provinces, between a handful of the pro-Roman aristocracy and all the other social strata. The civic community could not overcome these conflicts in the absence of a well-developed state apparatus. The army became the only real force. Earlier, it was a force directed against the outside world. Marius's reform made it a force capable of asserting itself within Rome as well.

Marius recruited an army, introduced iron discipline in it, and changed its structure—the principal unit was now a cohort consisting of six centuries, so that a legion was now made up of 10 cohorts and 60 centuries. This army routed Jugurtha, who fled to the Mauretanian king Bocchus. Lucius Cornelius Sulla, Marius's questor, was sent to conduct negotiations with Bocchus and secured the extradition of Jugurtha, thus laying the beginning of a dizzy career.

Marius's army also honourably acquitted itself in another hard test—the war with the Germanic tribes of the Cimbri and Teutones, who invaded Gaul and northern Italy and inflicted a number of crushing defeats on the Romans, who lost 60,000 soldiers. Marius, now elected consul year after year, repulsed the onslaught of the Germans after some hard fighting in 102 and 101, capturing 150,000 prisoners of war, including Teutobodes, king of the Teutones.

In the same year 101 B. C., Marius's colleague, consul Aquilius, suppressed another uprising of slaves in Sicily, which had lasted for three years. The incident that started the war strikingly characterises the position of the population of the Roman provinces and vassal kingdoms. To fight the Germans, Marius asked the king of Bithynia to send auxiliary units, but the latter replied that he could not comply with the request as most of his subjects had been sold into slavery to various provinces by the *publicani*. The Senate ordered an inquiry into the matter and the restoration of freedom for the unlawfully enslaved. The governor of Sicily freed 800 slaves but then stopped the inquiry, bribed by the masters. The slaves rebelled, electing the Syrian Salvius, who took the name of Tryphon, their king. Another rebel army was commanded by the Cilician Athenion, who later joined forces with Tryphon in Triocala,

the capital of the insurgents. They won several victories, although they failed to capture any fortified cities, especially because the urban slaves did not support them. The uprising was suppressed, and Sicilian slaves were forbidden to carry arms on pain of death, even for hunting.

This uprising in Sicily, just as the previous one, incited unrest among the plebeians in Rome. In the 1st century B. C., two parties in Rome's political life took shape—the *populares* and the *optimates*. The *optimates* were supporters of the power of the Senate and its monopoly of exploiting the provinces and the public lands; they opposed any reforms that benefited the plebs and any increase in the power of the tribunes of the people. The *populares* supported such reforms and appealed to popular assemblies and rallies of the plebs. Though they had no official status, these rallies played an increasing role in Rome's political life.

The question of whether the *optimates* and the *populares* were, in a sense, political parties, has been debated in modern scholarly literature on several occasions. Apparently they were not parties in the modern sense of the word; they had no orderly organisation, Rules, or permanent membership, individual politicians constantly changing sides. Still, they were sufficiently clearcut trends with their distinct programmes and ideologies, with which we are familiar from the works of the *optimas* Cicero and the *popularis* Sallust. Both admitted that Rome's affairs were in a bad way, and that the cause of that lay in deviation from the customs of the ancestors, and from the ideal republican system they had created. Cicero held that this deviation was due to the "unruliness" of the people and of the tribunes of the people—the demagogues who undermined the authority of the Senate and of the *optimates*, i. e., rich and noble citizens or simply the well-to-do who were not inclined to rebel. The government should be in the hands of those entitled to rule by their origin, wealth, and education; the common people must pursue their occupations, obey laws and maintain peace and tranquility. Cicero believed the attempts to undermine the existing relations of property, to redistribute land and cancel debts to be the greatest evil contravening natural justice and all the norms of human intercourse. In Sallust's view, all misfortunes came, on the contrary, from divesting the people of power and from the abuses of the corrupt, suborned,

and decadent nobility. The people and the tribunes of the people must occupy their proper place and show the Senate and the magistrates that all their laws and actions were powerless without the people, as the plebeians' secessions had once showed. After its victory, the people would have to do away with luxury, the power of money, and usury, becoming again a people of peasants and warriors.

The *populares*, who were often scions of noble families, frequently spoke at rallies of the common people (the *concilia plebis*), denouncing rich property owners who barred the access to public lands for the plebeians, made their debtors work in fetters on their immense estates, and surrounded themselves with crowds of slaves, some of whom, being their masters' favourites, were better off than many freeborn citizens. Their speeches apparently echoed the views of Poseidonius, who endeavoured to prove the pernicious effect of excessive development of slavery, citing the Sicilian uprisings as an example. The speeches of the *populares* found a lively response among listeners. Legends about Roman kings were very popular among the plebs, especially the one about Servius Tullius, who had given the people land liberating them from dependence, and had offered everyone a chance for promotion through ability rather than noble birth. Fortune, Servius Tullius's beloved, who had humiliated the highborn and elevated worthy simple people, was worshipped, as were the Lares, guarantors of justice in relations between members of families and between neighbours. Colleges dedicated to their cult embraced plebeians and slaves and were the broadest and the most active organisations.

In the late 2nd and early 1st centuries B. C., Marius, who enjoyed great popularity, was the recognised leader of the *populares*. His demand for land for his veterans was opposed by the Senate, and that threatened to bring to nought his military reform and to undermine his personal authority. Marius was supported by the popular tribunes Apuleius Saturninus and Servilius Glaucia who, relying on the votes of Marius's veterans, promulgated in 100 B. C. a law providing for the founding of colonies for veterans in Gaul, Sicily, Achaia, Macedonia, and Africa, where each veteran would get an allotment of 100 *jugera*. That made them owners of villas similar to those of Cato. The next year Marius was elected consul for the sixth time,

and Saturninus, tribune of the people for a second term. But during the election campaign of Glaucia, who was to be elected praetor, his supporters killed Memmius, the *optimates'* candidate, which resulted in fresh disturbances. The supporters of Saturninus and Glaucia occupied the Capitol. The Senate declared a state of emergency and entrusted Marius with the task of suppressing the rebellion, which the latter did after some hesitation. The Capitol was taken, Saturninus and Glaucia were killed, and their followers banished from Rome. Marius's betrayal made his position insecure, and he was compelled to leave for Asia.

*The Social War and the Disintegration of the Roman Civic Community.* The *optimates* won a temporary victory, but the unrest continued. The allies (*socii*) again demanded Roman citizenship; when the Senate refused to grant it, they rebelled. The war with the allies, called the Social War, lasted from 91 to 88 B. C. and was fought with extreme ferocity. In the city of Asculum, where the uprising began, all Romans were slaughtered. The Picenes, the Marsi, the Samnites and other, poorer tribes joined the rebels. Big landowners in Etruria, Umbria, northern Italy, as well as Greek cities and Latin and Roman colonies, remained loyal to Rome. The rebel army, commanded by the Marsian Pompeius Silo and the Samnite Papius Mutilus, was about 100,000 strong. Capturing the colonies, the rebels killed the local nobles and recruited in their army the common people and the slaves, who massacred their masters. Rome resorted to recruiting units of Gauls, Numidians and Spaniards, and still it could not achieve success. All Campania fell into the hands of the allies, and even Etruria and Umbria began to vacillate. In the end, Rome had to make concessions. In 89 B. C., all Italy south of the Padus was granted Roman citizenship, and in 88 B. C., Cisalpine Gaul received Latin citizenship. In that same year, the Roman army, commanded by Sulla, reoccupied Campania and defeated the allies.

Although at first the new citizens were distributed only among eight or ten tribes, to diminish their influence, the impact of the war was still quite considerable. Roman citizens, who now inhabited the whole of Italy, could not, practically speaking, take part in popular assemblies, so that the principle of

citizen participation in the government became void, as did the link between citizenship and owning land on community territory for now any inhabitant of Italy could own land in any part of its territory. Service in the legions became accessible to the new citizens, who received land for it, and the influence of supreme commanders spread throughout Italy. Italy was thus completely Romanised. The influence of well-to-do citizens and owners of villas and slaves grew, as they were mostly elected to the offices of city magistrates and municipal councils.

At the same time the situation in the provinces further deteriorated. The war with king Mithridates VI of Pontus began. Concluding alliances with Nicomedes III, king of Bithynia, with Tigranes, king of Armenia, with the Thracians and the Scythians, Mithridates captured nearly all of the Pontic coast, Paphlagonia, and Galatia; in Cappadocia, he overthrew the Roman protégé and installed a creature of his own. As he moved across Asia Minor, the provincials everywhere received Mithridates as their liberator. In response to his call, the population of the province of Asia slaughtered on the same day 80,000 Romans, Italics, their freedmen and slaves living there. On taking Delos, a major trade centre, Mithridates massacred all the Italic businessmen there. When he seized Athens, he drove away the rich pro-Roman aristocracy and established a democracy.

The Senate entrusted the prosecution of the war against Mithridates to Sulla, who had proved himself a talented general and a confirmed *optimas*. That decision roused discontent among the *populares*. When Sulla left for the army awaiting him at Nola, they forced the Senate to hand the command over to Marius, who had by that time returned to Rome. Simultaneously, the tribune Sulpicius Rufus promulgated the law on distribution of the new citizens among all the tribes and the return of all those banished after the rebellion of Saturninus and Glaucia. Sulla's soldiers, fearing that Marius would recruit a fresh army and they would be deprived of a chance of rich booty in Asia Minor, refused to obey the decision of the popular assembly and demanded that Sulla should lead them against Rome under the plea of saving Rome from Marius's tyranny. The city was taken, Sulpicius Rufus was killed, and his laws were repealed. Marius, declared an enemy of the people, fled to Africa. On Sulla's orders, the

powers of the tribunes of the people and of the popular assembly were curtailed and those of the Senate increased.

However, as soon as Sulla left, at the head of his army, for the war against Mithridates, the *populares* raised their head again. The consul L. Cornelius Cinna revived the proposals of Sulpicius Rufus, but Cinna's colleague Octavius, an *optimas*, pressed his expulsion, and Cinna was forced to leave for Campania, where the soldiers stationed there went over to his side. Marius returned from Africa. Disembarking in Etruria, he began to gather his supporters and even promised slaves freedom. Slaves began to throng towards his camp, but that gave his opponents a reason to describe his actions as those of a tyrant. Even his personal bodyguard (the *Bardiae*) consisted of slaves. Combining their forces, Cinna and Marius took Rome, cancelled Sulla's orders and began to persecute his followers, killing them and confiscating their property. Together with Cinna, Marius was elected consul for the year 86 (his seventh consulship), but he soon died. Many of his followers resented the fact that Marius had armed slaves. One of these malcontents, Sertorius, led a unit of troops which surrounded at night the camp of Marius's bodyguard and massacred them. Valerius Flaccus, who replaced Marius, and Cinna were entrusted with command of the army in the war against Mithridates, but both of them were killed – Flaccus in Illyria and Cinna, in Ancona, by rebellious troops.

In the meantime, Sulla, supported by the pro-Roman aristocracy, achieved major successes in the war against Mithridates. After a long siege, he seized Athens and let his soldiers sack the city; this was followed up by several other victories over the Pontic army in Greece. In an attempt to strengthen his party, Mithridates declared Greek cities free, cancelled debts, announced his intention to redistribute land, granted citizenship to the metics, and freed many slaves, which increased the aristocracy's hatred towards him. The Romans won back Macedonia, Pergamum, and the islands of the Aegean. Sulla, impatient to return to Rome, concluded peace with Mithridates in 85 B.C. Mithridates gave up Asia Minor and had to pay an indemnity of 2.3 million talents. As punishment for its disloyalty, Asia had to pay 20,000 talents and tribute for five years.

In the spring of 83, Sulla led 1,600 ships to



Brundisium and disembarked 40,000 troops there. Prominent *optimates* flocked to that city. A new civil war began, in which Marius's followers suffered several defeats. In 82, Sulla seized Rome. Marius's adherents were punished with extraordinary cruelty. The Samnites who had supported them were executed in the field of Mars. The cities of Samnium and Etruria were destroyed. The so-called proscriptions—a list of Sulla's outlawed opponents—were announced in Rome. Everyone who killed any of the persons proscribed, or informed on them, received a reward; if the killer or informer was a slave, the reward was freedom. The property of outlawed citizens was confiscated and sold at auctions. Forty senators and 1,600 knights were thus put to death. Ten thousand slaves who had belonged to proscribed persons and who were set free by Sulla (they were named “cornelians”) formed his personal bodyguard. 120,000 veterans received lands in Samnium, Etruria, and Campania. The popular assembly appointed Sulla dictator. The number of senators rose from 300 to 600, all the new members being Sulla's followers. To investigate various criminal offences, new permanent courts were set up, which were given the right to mete out punishment in accordance with an emergency procedure. The equestrian order was barred from participation in the courts. The number of questors and praetors was increased. The governors of provinces—two proconsuls and eight *propraetors*—were granted absolute powers, and the *publicani* lost their most profitable sources of income in Asia. Sulla introduced greater order in the passage of officials through the magistracies and established the candidates' minimal age—30 years for a questor, 40 for a praetor, and 43 for a consul. Tribunes of the people were forbidden to fill magistracies after their term of office. He published several laws which introduced harsh penalties for criminal offences (murder, forgery, etc.), failure to obey the magistrates, power abuses, and bribery. Sulla's measures were an important stage in the transformation of Rome into a state in the modern acceptance of the term.

Although Sulla's dictatorship was supported by the *optimates* who proclaimed themselves champions of the “customs of the ancestors”, it deviated greatly from the norms of the old civic community. Just as Marius's appeals to slaves, proscriptions undermined the absolute power of the *pater familias*, and

gave slaves a chance to take part in the fighting among freemen. The lands of proscribed individuals were confiscated and handed over to the veterans at the bidding of the head of the victorious group and not by sanction of the citizens' body. Sulla's absolute and unlimited dictatorship contravened the principles of the Roman constitution which, though unwritten, was sanctified by custom and tradition. Sulla's personality was also far from the ideal of the ancestors—he claimed that Fortune and Venus were especially kind towards him, and called himself Felix, “the lucky one”. At the same time the war between Marians and Sullans showed the significance and strength of the new army. On the whole, the social base of Sulla's dictatorship was narrow. The plebeians, the equites, the landowners who lost their estates, the provincials oppressed by their own aristocracy and now fleeced without any checks by the governors and their staff consisting of freedmen and slaves—all were against Sulla. An excellent illustration of this fact is Cicero's famous speeches against Verres, governor of Sicily. In Cicero's words, even the name of Romans was hated in the provinces. The war with Mithridates showed that the population of the provinces was ready to rise at the first opportunity.

The inviability of Sulla's measures became apparent immediately after he gave up the dictatorship, for reasons still not clear, in 79 B. C., and died a year later. Right after a ceremonious funeral, disturbances broke out again. Aemilius Lepidus, the consul of 78 B. C., tried to abrogate Sulla's laws, but the Senate declared him a public enemy. His army was beaten by a force commanded by Pompey. The Marian Sertorius, invited to Spain by rebellious Lusitanians, firmly established himself there. He was immensely popular among the tribes of Spain which believed him to be a favourite of the gods. At the head of an army consisting of these tribesmen and the Marians who had fled to Sertorius, he inflicted several defeats on Pompey sent against him. Only after Sertorius's assassination by a traitor was this movement crushed. In 73 B. C., however, a new war with Mithridates began. The Roman forces were commanded by L. Lucullus. At first, he won several victories, taking Sinope, Mithridates's capital, and a large booty, but his further progress was slowed down by mutiny among the troops.

In 74 B. C., at a time of defeats in external conflicts

and at the peak of internal disturbances, a major uprising of slaves broke out; it was headed by Spartacus, a Thracian who had been made a gladiator for refusal to serve in the Roman auxiliary forces. Antique authors described Spartacus as a very talented strategist and a brilliant organiser. The revolt began with the escape of Spartacus and 70 other gladiators from a gladiators' training school in Capua. They established a fortified camp on Mt Vesuvius, and their numbers gradually increased as slaves and impoverished peasants joined them. A 3,000-strong Roman unit barred the descent from Vesuvius, but Spartacus outmanoeuvred it. Using ladders made of wild vines, Spartacus and his force descended Vesuvius on the opposite side, took the soldiers in the rear and routed them. Praetor Varinius, sent against Spartacus, was also worsted. The slave army grew rapidly, and soon it was 70,000 strong (100,000, according to other sources). The movement spread from Campania to other regions. Roman historians believed that Spartacus's goal was to lead the slaves across the Alps to free Gaul. Indeed, at first Spartacus triumphantly made his way to the north of Italy. Near Mutina, he defeated the army of the governor of Cisalpine Gaul, opening the way to the Alps, but then, instead of crossing them, he turned back. The reasons for that decision were not clear. Some modern historians believe that discord began among the insurgents, while others hold that Spartacus had intended to take Rome from the very beginning. In any case, he moved south and beat the army of both consuls in Picenum. The Senate then sent against Spartacus the praetor M. Licinius Crassus, granted extraordinary powers and assisted by Lucullus and Pompey recalled from Spain. Spartacus, however, went further south, intending to go across to Sicily with pirates' help and stir up rebellion among slaves there. But he was deceived by the pirates and had great trouble extricating himself from Bruttium where Crassus had invested him. For reasons unknown, two units, 12,000 strong, broke away from Spartacus's army and were annihilated by Crassus's troops. In 71, the insurgents were destroyed by Crassus's army in Apulia, despite the desperate fight they put up, and Spartacus himself fell in battle. The remnants of Spartacus's army were mopped up by Pompey, and 6,000 slaves were crucified along the via Appia.

The Spartacus uprising, which was much more

dangerous to the Roman slave-owners than the rebellions in Sicily, showed quite clearly that slaves had become a numerous class hostile to slave-owners, and that a strong state was needed to suppress it.

Despite the slave-owners' victory, internal difficulties continued. The agrarian question again became acute at that time, although it took somewhat different forms from those of the past. Veterans and poor peasants demanded land allotments and guarantees from seizure of their holdings by rich neighbours. Big landowners demanded guarantees against new agrarian laws and redistribution of land. Sulla's followers, buying up the lands of proscribed owners for a song, had made immense fortunes. Their estates, often covering many thousand *jugera*, were mostly tilled not by slaves but by tenants, the colons, who were often their clients. Strabo mentions that some of Latium's smaller towns became villages on private lands apparently inhabited by colons. The labour of enslaved debtors was widely used on such estates. Extensive grazing lands were very profitable. Among the richest men of the end of the republic, Pliny the Elder mentioned Cecilius Claudius Isidorus, a freedman who left in his will 3,600 pair of oxen, 257,000 heads of other livestock, 4,116 slaves and 60 million sesterces. From Varro's work on agriculture we know that its organisation was vastly improved compared to Cato's times. The improvement was brought about by accumulated experiences and knowledge, a well-thought-out placement of workers, division of labour among specialists in various branches of the economy, a system of penalties and rewards, and specialisation of the functions of the villa's considerably increased administrative staff, which now enjoyed various privileges. For instance, a *villicus* was given not only a concubine but also a *peculium*, which sometimes enabled him to rent part of the master's land, contract for various jobs, etc. Rational management of an estate, particularly one planted with perennials, demanded capital investment, but, as Cicero wrote, landowners did not want to invest money in improvements on their estates for fear of confiscations and agrarian laws. Guarantees for small-scale and larger properties and optimal conditions for land cultivation were becoming vital necessities for further development of the economy, which had by that time achieved a rather high level.

Craftsmen of all kinds were very numerous, particularly in Rome. Fairly large workshops appeared. Thus, up to 100 slaves were employed in some workshops producing fine pottery. Jewellers, craftsmen dying fabrics in purple, perfumers and others toiled to produce luxury articles. Thousands of slaves and plebeians worked on the construction of villas, city residences, and public buildings. Household crafts continued to exist, but urban craftsmen who worked for the market or to fill clients' orders played an increasing role. Not only luxury objects but also foodstuffs, clothes, and objects of metal and wood were items of trade. Apart from wholesale merchants there were small shopkeepers and pedlars. The level achieved by agriculture, the crafts, and trade became incompatible with the social system of old peasant Rome.

The republic, which had arisen on the basis of the civic community, could no longer cope with the new social and economic tasks. Ruled by a fraction of the nobility, which grew rich by plundering the provinces, and by citizens who could attend popular assemblies (these were mostly urban plebeians fed and amused with money pumped out of the provinces), it could not build a broader social basis, either in Italy or in the provinces, for Roman domination, and neither did it see any need for such a basis. It was also unable to transform the army—the main force in the civil wars—into a part of the military and bureaucratic mechanism necessary to run the state. Realising that a strong army was needed to maintain sway over the conquered lands and to acquire new ones, the Senate at the same time continually fought supreme commanders and thus the army over allotments for veterans. As for the commanders, they had to rely on the popular assembly on this issue, in order not to lose their authority, and that meant concessions to the plebs.

*The Fall of the Senate Republic.* That was exactly what happened in 70 B. C., when the *optimas* Pompey and the Sullan Crassus, famous for his wealth acquired during the proscriptions, gained consulships, with the support of the plebs. They repealed Sulla's laws, removed 60 of the most loyal Sullans from the Senate, restored the powers of the tribunes of the people, handed the courts over to committees of senators, equites, and aerarian tribunes (*tribuni aera-*

*rii*) elected by the tribes, and restored the offices of *publicani* in Asia for members of the equestrian order. After the consulship of Pompey and Crassus, the *populares* again became active. Gaius Julius Caesar, Marius's nephew and Cinna's son-in-law, became one of their leaders on his return from banishment. During the funeral of his aunt, Marius's wife, he made a speech praising Marius's services to the republic, and when he became questor, he restored Marius's trophies in the Forum removed by Sulla. In 63, Julius Caesar was elected chief pontiff, and in his term office as praetor he spent huge sums of money on games and handouts for the people, denouncing at the same time prominent Sullans at court trials. Cicero also began his career at that time with a speech against Sulla's richest freedman, Chrysogonus, and Sicily's governor Gaius Verres; the pains Cicero took to gather the facts against Verres, and his brilliance as a public speaker, immediately attracted general attention.

In the meantime, the situation called for a fresh reconciliation between the Senate and Pompey. In 67 B. C., Pompey had been given extraordinary powers to exterminate piracy that endangered the transportation of food supplies to Rome, and he had coped with that task in just three months. After that he had been granted the same extraordinary powers to complete the war with Mithridates that had not been finished by Lucullus. In 63 he triumphantly ended that war and began to arrange things in Asia as he saw fit, appointing and removing the kings of states conquered by Rome. Pompey founded about 40 poleis in the eastern provinces, handing over to the city magistracies the collection of taxes from the urban neighbourhood and thus consolidating the position of those magistracies.

Owing to Pompey's conquests, the income of the Roman treasury increased by 70 per cent. He was a real hero in the eyes of the public. In Asia, even his favourite freedmen were honoured as kings. In 62, he returned to Italy.

The situation here was far from tranquil. In 64 B. C., Cicero was elected consul. His rival Catiline (Lucius Sergius Catilina), who was defeated at the polls and had earlier been suspected of underhand dealings, organised a conspiracy to overthrow the existing system, in which extremely diverse strata of the population were involved including both nobles and plebeians who demanded cancellation of debts.

The conspiracy was joined by the enslaved peasants of Etruria, who organised armed groups commanded by a certain Gaius Manlius. Some of Catiline's adherents also appealed to the urban slaves, who had small shops and workshops as their *peculia* or did odd jobs as hired hands with their masters' permission, coming in close contact with free plebeians, taking part in the colleges, and supporting the plebs at rallies.

Some antique authors believed, apparently with certain justification, that Catiline was backed by Crassus, an enemy of the Senate, and Caesar. Cicero knew about the conspiracy, but he had no sufficient evidence to proceed from speeches against Catiline to more decisive action. Finally a letter from some Catilinarians to the ambassadors of the Allobrogi who were at that time in Rome, calling on them to rise in revolt, fell into his hands. That was proof of high treason, and Cicero ordered the arrest of some Catilinarians. Catiline himself joined Manlius. The conspirators were tried in the Senate; despite Caesar's protest, they were sentenced to death and strangled in gaol. Catiline himself fell fighting the troops sent against Manlius. Cicero posed as the country's saviour, singing his own praises.

What we know of Catiline comes from the writings of his two worst enemies. Cicero described him in his speeches as an instigator of all rebellious elements and enemies of law and order, ready to destroy Rome to avoid paying their debts. The historian Sallust saw Catiline as a typical representative of corrupt and vice-ridden nobility, ambitious, self-seeking, and shameless. It is therefore difficult to draw a true picture of Catiline and of his movement. In any case, he undoubtedly had a following among certain sections of the plebs, and his failure was an indication of the latter's weakness. The plebs was even unable to counteract the dissolution of colleges ordered by the Senate. On the other hand, the Senate's ability for resistance also weakened. When Pompey's demand for land allotments for his veterans was rejected, and his desire to run for the office of consul thwarted, Pompey formed an alliance with Crassus and Caesar, who had just returned from Spain, where he had been *propraetor*.

That agreement was later termed the First Triumvirate. It united the army, represented by Pompey, big businessmen close to Crassus, and the *populares* who recognised Caesar as their leader—all of them

opposed to the Senate. The triumvirs ensured the election of Caesar as consul for the year 59. Despite the Senate's opposition headed by Marcus Cato, great-grandson of Cato the Censor, Caesar promulgated the law granting land allotments for Pompey's veterans from the remaining public lands. At the end of Caesar's consulship, he was made governor of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyria and granted the right to recruit two legions.

By that time Caesar must have realised that only the army could be a real power base of a political leader, not the badly organised plebs. The movement of Clodius, elected popular tribune for the year 58, was an even more striking indication of the plebs's weakness than Catiline's failure. Clodius began his career by inciting Lucullus's troops to mutiny; he then returned to Rome, where he joined Caesar's party and gained notoriety by wearing women's clothes to steal into Caesar's house for an assignation with his wife during the festivities of the Bona Dea, at which no men could be present. Caught in the act, he was tried for sacrilege. Cicero spoke against him, but the judges, bribed by Crassus, acquitted him. Caesar, who appeared as a witness, spoke in favour of Clodius, and when the latter decided to become a tribune of the people, Caesar arranged his transfer from the patrician to the plebeian order, and Clodius was elected for the office. In the words of Cicero, Clodius acted as a demagogue and a candidate for tyranny. Restoring plebeian colleges which served the cult of the Lares and had been banned by the Senate, he recruited to these colleges masses of plebeians, freedmen and slaves, who terrorised the *optimates* and even Pompey himself. With their help, Clodius burnt down the temple of the Nymphs where the census archives were kept; he intended to make the slaves of the king of Cyprus, who had just bequeathed his kingdom to Rome, freedmen, and even to free all slaves, following the example of tyrants. Clodius promulgated a new *lex frumentaria*, according to which 300,000 plebeians could receive grain free, and forced the banishment of Cicero, blaming him for the illegal execution of the Catilinarians, who had been deprived of the chance to appeal to the people. Cicero's property was confiscated, his house destroyed, and on its site the temple of Freedom was erected. The *optimates*, frightened by all these events, surrounded themselves by bodyguards, buying glad-

iators for that purpose. Elections of magistrates were often disrupted.

In practical terms, however, Clodius did not achieve much, although, as a *popularis*, he went much further than Caesar had believed necessary. Gradually Clodius retired from public life, and in 52 B. C. he was killed by the slaves of Milo, his fierce enemy. The plebs, divided into rural and urban, with further subdivisions within the urban plebs, which included both indigent citizens and owners of shops and workshops concerned that they might lose their property during disturbances, could no longer justify the hopes that *populares* like Sallust set on it. It could only become a force again when organised as an army. All these events and class shifts in society radically changed the nature of Rome as a civic community. Rome was on the eve of major political and social changes. Certain developments that had begun to show in the 2nd century B. C., now stood out clearly in all the spheres of culture and everyday life.

Magnificent public and private edifices were built. Having learnt the dome technique, the Romans could increase considerably the size of their buildings. After the invention of concrete made from lava, it became possible to paint large frescoes on walls, with outsize figures and landscapes. The villas and city residences of the aristocracy were surrounded with gardens, and specially trained slaves became gardeners, a privileged group among household servants. Multistorey buildings were also erected, where rooms were let to the poor that flocked to Rome, at a great profit for the landlords. Roman sculptors followed Greek patterns, but they evolved a style of their own in portrait sculpture. Unlike the Greeks, who often prettified the originals, the Romans did their best to achieve an exact portrayal of the subject's appearance and character. Cicero, and later Horace in his *Ars poetica*, worked out a theory of realistic art of which the principal tasks were the study and representation of real life in all its diversity and precise delineation of character, habits and views of persons of different age and status. They condemned deviations from the truth of life and opposed any embellishment of it. Cicero believed that even in architecture, ornaments without a purpose might appear pleasing at first but soon began to pall, like an excessively sweet dish. At the same time magistrates, in a bid for popularity, tried

to surpass one another in the splendour of the spectacles they put on, so that the spectators learnt to expect more and more expensive amusements. Next to comedies and tragedies, mimes, or amusing short plays, appeared. Publilius Syrus, a freedman, was famous as an author of mimes, and his sayings became popular proverbs (*sententiae*).

There were quite a few authors (often slaves and freedmen) who wrote works on history, linguistics, and literary criticism. Greek and Latin books were in great demand. The thirst for education became universal. In the view of Vitruvius, an author of a treatise on architecture, an architect must be conversant not only with construction engineering but also with medicine, astronomy, philosophy, and mythology. In Varro's words, an estate owner and his manager must know something of agronomy, medicine, veterinary matters, and astronomy. Varro himself was a scholar of wide-ranging interests—he wrote on agriculture, Latin, the history of Roman cults and religious institutions, and many other subjects. Another outstanding thinker was Lucretius Carus, author of the famous poem *De rerum natura* written in the spirit of Epicureanism. Aspiring to conquer man's fear of the gods and the destiny of the soul after life, he formulated a natural explanation of the origin of the universe, the earth, plants, animals, and the history of human society, an explanation that did not envisage any intervention from the gods and was entirely based on the theory of combination and separation of eternally moving atoms. Society, in his view, did not evolve at the will of the gods but owing to men's observations of nature and a reasonable idea of the good of all recorded in customs and laws which could change along with changes in the conception of the good of all.

The endless misfortunes brought by external and civil wars made men look for consolation and guidance to teachings concerned with the question of how one could live when all the customary norms and concepts disintegrated and the evil reigning in the world raised doubts about divine and human justice. Various answers were offered, based on the theories of diverse Greek philosophical schools that had numerous adherents in Rome. Epicureans advised to "live inconspicuously", to avoid political strife, to be content with a circle of friends and men of similar views, and to be moderate, lest excesses should lead to suffering. Stoics believed that man



could be happy if he valued, above all other things, virtue prompted by nature itself, did his duty by society, and set little store by the external circumstances – wealth, status, honours, freedom and even life itself. Pythagoreanism again became widespread; its exponent in Rome at that time was Publius Nigidius Figulus, famous for his learning. Astrology, philosophically substantiated by Marcus Manilius, became extremely popular – everyone believed in it, beginning with slaves, who turned to fortune-tellers infesting the Forum, and ending with Marius, Sulla, or Pompey, who constantly resorted to astrologers' advice.

There was a revival of interest in various prophecies, such as the Etruscan tradition about a periodically repeated sequence of ages and the imminent coming of a new "Golden Age". Returning from the East, soldiers brought to Rome the cults of Egyptian and Asian gods. Despite interdictions these cults found great numbers of followers. The Dionysus cult and his mysteries were again revived. Many Romans in Greece were initiated in the Eleusinian and Samothracian mysteries.

At the same time, neglect for the traditional Roman religion grew among the upper classes. Cicero's treatise *De divinatione* mocked all the traditional ways of divining the will of the gods, and his treatise *De natura deorum* (*On the Nature of the Gods*) expressed the view that religion and its institutions were obligatory for the common people, but believing or not believing in the gods was a matter of private preference. Varro held a similar opinion, dividing religion into that of the poets, who invented all kinds of absurd myths, the religion of the philosophers and religion obligatory for all citizens and established by the society they lived in. Family morality, formerly so rigorous, declined. Divorces became more frequent. Sons were in fact less and less dependent on fathers and had property of their own. Rich aristocratic women lived a life of ease and freedom, indulging in numerous love affairs.

All this was evidence of basic changes in the traditional ideology of the civic community, and of the development of individualism. Significant in this respect was the activity of the so-called *Neoteroi* ("new poets"), to which the poet Catullus belonged. Following Hellenistic models, the *Neoteroi* wrote elaborate poems on mythological themes and were absolutely useless members of society, in Cicero's

view. The main theme of the work of Catullus, one of the best Roman poets, was his love, happy at first and miserable later, for P. Clodius's sister, a well-known "society lioness" whom he called Lesbia. The world that surrounded him was largely eclipsed by the joys and sufferings of love which he described with extraordinary force.

The development of individualism also manifested itself in an acute interest for the lives of outstanding persons. Prominent political leaders, such as Sulla, Cicero and Caesar, wrote memoirs in which they justified their actions (only Caesar's *Commentaries* on the Gallic and Civil wars have survived). Catiline's conspiracy and the war with Jugurtha were the themes of Sallust's works.

Cicero did a great deal for the development of culture of his times. His speeches, letters to his friends, later published, and other works are the principal source of our knowledge of the history, culture and ideology of those turbulent years.

Returning in 54 from exile as something of a hero, he began a vigorous literary activity. He wrote several historico-philosophical treatises – the *De republica*, *De Legibus* – expounding his views of the best possible state structure and of laws that must underly it. In his philosophical treatises, he also tried to establish links between philosophy and a political programme for the renovation of the republic, calling for the unification and harmony between all the "good" people, that is, people loyal to the existing system; at the same time Cicero created the image of a certain "ideal man" (whose prototype he saw in Scipios, particularly Scipio Aemilianus, who had fought against the Gracchi), a princeps capable of heading the republic and establishing order in it in the common interest – in actual fact, in the interests of the *optimates*. He saw no contradiction between absolute personal power and the republic, which he defined as the "property of the people", in accordance with the traditional Roman views. Any form of government – monarchy, aristocracy, democracy – was beneficial for the republic, provided they functioned in the common interest and did not violate law and justice. Only the perverted forms of government – tyranny, oligarchy and ochlocracy (the power of the mob) were pernicious for the republic, Cicero believed. In this way, he justified ideologically the transition to absolute personal power which had been prepared practically by the



dictatorship of Sulla, the extraordinary powers of Pompey, and the rule of the triumvirs. Cicero saw such an absolute ruler as an aristocrat of exceptional merits. The plebeians awaited a successor to the people-loving kings who had liberated the people from the power of the Senate. The question was who would become head of the republic. It was clear from the overall situation that the choice would be made in favour of a leader supported by the army and capable of solving the acute problems of everyday life.

Pompey, whose links with the Senate again became closer, particularly after Crassus fell in the war with Parthia, was a possible candidate for dictatorship. But it was precisely these links with the Senate that undermined Pompey's popularity. Besides, he did not have the qualities necessary for a decisive break with the past. Caesar's role at that time kept growing. He had the reputation of a *popularis* and great charisma, as even his enemy Cicero admitted, but his most important assets were his diplomatic and military talents that had brought him the victories in Gaul. It had taken 200 years to subdue Spain, and 10, to conquer Gaul. Caesar began the war on the plea of liberating the Gauls from the forces of the German chieftain Ariovistus who had invaded their lands, although in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War* (*De bello Gallico*) Caesar recorded these words Ariovistus is supposed to have said during their conversation: whoever conquered anyone without declaring that he was bringing freedom? This fairly cynical idea was apparently Caesar's own. Skilfully playing on the contradictions between various tribes and between tribal aristocracy and the people, suppressing any resistance to the Roman army, crossing the Rhine twice and moving on to Britain then unknown to the Romans (which produced a great impression in Rome), he turned Gaul into a province and won a great booty and a million prisoners of war. Besides, Caesar's gifts as military leader, his concern for the needs of his soldiers, with whom he shared all the hardships of the campaigns, and his talent for oratory, helped him to build a well-trained, disciplined and loyal army. He also won the favour of the Gallic aristocracy, granting it Roman citizenship, privileges and lands, and admitting its members to his army. When the Arverni tribe rose against Caesar at the end of the war, led by its king Vercingetorix, who tried to unite all Gaul

in a war against the Romans, the aristocracy of the other tribes did not support him, and Caesar, despite the rebels' superior numbers and several victories, was able to suppress the uprising, seizing the fortress of Alesia in which Vercingetorix took refuge.

In the eyes of the Romans, Caesar was not only a conqueror of a vast new territory but also an avenger of Rome's humiliation during the Gallic invasion of 390 B. C. True, the Senate, headed by extreme *optimates* like Cato, was disgruntled at Caesar's rise to eminence, and it demanded that his army should be disbanded, threatening to withdraw permission to run for the office of consul. When the popular tribune Mark Antony imposed a veto on that demand, the Senate disregarded it, and Antony fled to Caesar. The Senate now set all its hopes on Pompey, appointed "consul without a college". The war became inevitable. On January 10, 49 B. C., Caesar, under the plea of defending the rights of the tribunes of the people, crossed the river Rubicon separating Cisalpine Gaul from Italy. One after another, Italic cities went over to Caesar's side. It was rumoured that on seizing power Pompey intended to announce proscriptions, as Sulla had done. Even Pompey's troops stationed in Italy joined Caesar. Pompey had no other choice but to flee. He went to Greece, accompanied by numerous *optimates*, including Cicero, who wrote to his friend Pomponius Atticus that, although he had no special liking for the Pompeians, he followed the *optimates* out of habit, as an ox will follow oxen and sheep will follow sheep.

The civil war also spread through the provinces—Spain, Greece, and Africa. Pompey was supported by the local aristocracy loyal to the Senate, and Caesar, by urban landowners opposed to the aristocracy and the power of the Senate. Almost everywhere the cities went over to Caesar, who granted Roman citizenship to his adherents, sometimes to whole cities (e. g., Gades). It was the army's loyalty and the alliance with the urban population that ensured Caesar's victory.

On occupying Italy, Caesar went over to Spain, where some of Pompey's troops were stationed. Defeating them near the city of Ilerda, Caesar moved to Greece, where Pompey's main forces were concentrated. Caesar lost the first battle near Dyrrhachium in Epirus, but in the second battle, at Pharsalus in Thessaly, Pompey was routed and fled to Egypt, where he was killed on orders from king

Ptolemy XI Dionysus, who feared Caesar's anger. Following Pompey to Egypt, Caesar interfered in the dynastic strife there and, after a rather difficult campaign that was later called the Alexandrian War, handed over the throne of Egypt to queen Cleopatra, who had become his mistress.

After a speedy victory over Pharnaces, king of Pontus (the famous report to the Senate, *Veni, vidi, vici*, referred to that victory), Caesar returned for a while to Rome and then departed for Africa, where the Pompeians had gathered significant forces and concluded an alliance with Juba, king of Numidia. But here too the cities went over to Caesar's side, and the Pompeians' position became hopeless. In the battle of Thapsus they were defeated; Juba was killed, and his kingdom was made a province. Utica was the Pompeians' last stronghold. Here, Cato the Younger established his headquarters, but the Caesarean party gained the upper hand there too. Cato committed suicide and was later named *Uticensis*; his name became a symbol of a hero who would die rather than outlive freedom. The last and, as Caesar himself admitted, the most difficult campaign of the civil war was the second campaign in Spain against Pompey's sons, Gnaeus and Sextus, who had gathered considerable forces. In 45 B. C., the war ended with Caesar's victory near the city of Munda. Gnaeus was killed soon after, but Sextus escaped.

Caesar became an absolute ruler of the Roman state. He was granted an unlimited dictatorship and tribunitian powers for life. He was named Imperator—a title usually conferred on a victorious general by troops on the battlefield, and was also granted the title of "father of the country". Without consulting anyone, he could decide the issues of war and peace, propose candidates for the magistracies, and look after the society's morals. His insignia were a purple toga, a laurel wreath and a seat ornamented with ivory and gold. In May 45, his statue was erected in the temple of Quirinus in Rome.

But Caesar, who had exercised such talent, resolution and even cruelty on his way to power, was unable to make use of it when it was in his hands. He forgave Cicero, who returned to Rome, outwardly submissive but in actual fact full of hatred for Caesar. "We are all Caesar's slaves," he wrote, "and Caesar is a slave of the circumstances." Caesar forgave Pompeian nobles, made them members of his retinue, and rejected the idea of proscriptions, con-

tent with half-measures. This antagonised many of his followers but did not win him the favour of the Senate, although he included 600 new members in it—military men with a fine war record, municipal aristocrats and even provincials. All this seemed to the nobility an unheard-of violation of all norms and traditions. There were long delays in providing veterans with land allotments. Only a few colonies, Carthage and Corinth among them, were founded for the poor. The plebs was disgruntled at the reduction of grain dole and the new ban on colleges. A certain reduction of the plebs's debts to usurers' and landlords brought unified relief. Caesar's measures to extend the social basis of Roman domination in the provinces were more consistent. Cisalpine Gaul was granted Roman citizenship and ceased to be regarded as a province. A special municipal law unified the administrative system of colonies and municipia, which now reproduced the structure of the Roman civic community. The popular assembly elected magistrates out of those who had the necessary property qualification (apparently 200,000 sesterces); they made up the municipal council and were called decurions. The city was given a territory divided into private allotments and public lands. The latter, just as the city's treasury, were managed by the magistrates, who pledged their property as they swore to manage the affairs conscientiously. Public lands, workshops, belonging to the city, and contracts to various projects were leased. It was the decurions' duty to see to the correct performance of the city gods' rites, to the conduct of festivals and spectacles, regular supplies of foodstuffs for the city, the administration of justice, and census-taking on the city's territory. In this way, a stratum of urban land- and slave-owners, bearers of Roman policy and Roman culture, evolved; later, the decurions became the third privileged order, next to the senators and the equites, but during Caesar's dictatorship that order was merely taking shape and could not be a great help to him.

The nobility took advantage of Caesar's half-and-half policies. Rumours were circulated about his intention to become a king, after the model of Hellenistic monarchs, and to move the capital to Alexandria. His liaison with Cleopatra was condemned. He was called a tyrant who had strangled freedom. The people recalled Brutus of the ancient times and appealed to his descendant Junius Brutus,

a friend of Cicero and a particular favourite of Caesar. Brutus, who hesitated at first, was involved in the conspiracy against Caesar headed by Cassius, a Pompeian forgiven by Caesar—a strong-willed and vigorous man who had made a reputation for himself during the war with Parthia. The conspirators were in a hurry to finish off Caesar, since the latter, sensing the weakness of his position, intended to leave Rome for the war with Parthia. He may have known of the conspiracy and believed death at the hands of the conspirators to be the best way out of the situation. When asked what sort of death he preferred, he is said to have replied, “A sudden one”. In any case, on the day appointed by the conspirators for his assassination, March 15, 44 B. C., he went to the Senate despite advice on all sides not to do so, and was killed there.

This act of terrorism could not, however, save the republic of the nobility. The conspirators believed that, when they announced the tyrant's death and the restoration of freedom, the grateful people would declare them their saviours and throw the body of assassinated Caesar into the Tiber. But for Caesar's veterans and for the people Caesar remained, despite the inconsistency of his policy, a victorious emperor, leader of the *populares*, a hero who fell at the hands of the Senate, like Servius Tullius. When consul Mark Antony announced in his speech at the funeral that Caesar had bequeathed 300 sesterces to each plebeian, and his rich gardens beyond the Tiber, to the whole of the people, the people's indignation flared up with even greater force. The people started to sack the houses of *optimates*, and on the site of Caesar's funeral pyre sacrifices were made to him as if he were god. It was believed that the comet which appeared in those days was Caesar's soul that had ascended to heaven. The frightened *optimates* did not dare to appear in public, and the conspirators took refuge on the Capitoline. In the end, they decided to settle the matter with Antony, who had had time to take possession of Caesar's treasury and papers (which enabled him to cite Caesar's yet unpublished instructions). At a session of the Senate at which Cicero was present, a compromise was reached: Antony and his colleague Dolabella would restore order in the city; Caesar would not be declared a tyrant, and his orders would remain valid, but his assassins would not be punished either—Brutus and Cassius would be sent off from Rome

and given the provinces of Crete and Cyrenaica. Sextus Pompey would be allowed to return to Italy and to assume possession of his father's property. Dictatorship would be banned for all time to come.

When Antony pressed the law on the handing over of Gaul to him, his relations with the Senate deteriorated again. Cicero was especially fierce in his denunciations of Antony. He made 14 speeches (which he called *Philippics*) purporting to prove that Antony was a drunkard and libertine and that, like Caesar, he would consolidate his positions in Gaul and then seize power. Cicero called on all the “best people” to unite against the new tyrant.

During this conflict, which was daily growing more fierce, Octavian, Caesar's grand-nephew, adopted son (under the name of Gaius Julius Caesar Octavian) and appointed heir, became a major force. Together with his friend Agrippa, 18-year-old Octavian was studying military art in the city of Apollonia in Epirus when he received news of the events in Rome. The youth's mother and stepfather advised him not to go to Rome and not to interfere in the whirlwind events. But the soldiers of Caesar and Agrippa stationed in Apollonia urged him to try his strength and to accept Caesar's inheritance. According to legend, a famous astrologer offered to tell the fortunes of Octavian and Agrippa. Agrippa's career appeared so brilliant that proud Octavian refused to have his fortune told, for fear of being eclipsed by his friend. But when the astrologer drew up his horoscope, after all, he went down on his knees before the youth who was destined, he said, to become the ruler of the world. However that may have been, Octavian arrived in Italy, where Caesar's veterans and rich freedmen thronged to his house inciting him to revenge. In Rome, Octavian went to Antony demanding Caesar's treasury, that he might fulfil his father's will. Antony rudely replied that Caesar's treasury was empty, and that Octavian had only Antony to thank that he was not now the son of a disgraced tyrant. Octavian then began to play a game that was remarkably subtle for someone of his age. On the one hand, he ingratiated himself with Cicero, calling him father and asking his advice. Realising that Caesar's son could be a great asset to the opposition to Antony, and taking Octavian's modesty for a sign of mediocrity, he began praising Octavian everywhere as someone sent by Jupiter himself to save Rome from Antony's

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tyranny. On the other hand, in conferences with his followers Octavian said that his relations with Cicero were no more than a ruse to which he had to resort in view of Antony's behaviour, and that he would avenge Caesar's death as soon as he felt strong enough. He used the money he received from the Senate through Cicero's mediation to seduce Antony's soldiers with higher salaries.

At the end of 44 B. C., Antony went to Gaul. The Senate sent an army against him, which was joined by the troops recruited by Octavian. Antony was defeated in the battle of Mutina. The Senate then decided that it could now do without Octavian, and refused him the consulship it had earlier promised. Octavian then joined forces with Antony and Aemilius Lepidus, a Caesarean and governor of Gallia Narbonensis—allegedly at the insistence of the troops that grieved over discord among men who were closest to Caesar. The Second Triumvirate was concluded before the assembled troops. Rome was taken without much difficulty by the Caesarean army. Octavian was elected consul, and the popular assembly granted the triumvirs extraordinary powers to restore the republic. The amnesty to Caesar's assassins, who were gathering armed forces and money in the eastern provinces, was cancelled, and it was decided to declare war on them. To punish Caesar's assassins and their adherents, proscriptions were drawn up in which, at Antony's insistence, Cicero was included among the first; he was soon killed by a centurion who recognized him. Distribution of land among the veterans began. Eighteen cities of Italy were deprived of land, implements, and slaves in favour of the new owners. *Optimates'* lands were confiscated. During the proscriptions, 300 senators, 2,000 equites and many other people died. That period remained in the memory of the Romans as a time of terror and chaos. Wives informed on their husbands, and children, on their fathers, slaves, on their masters, to get the reward or simply for revenge. The troops committed numerous outrages. Citizens cursed the "ungodly soldiers" that had deprived them of their lands and other property.

The situation in the eastern provinces, where Brutus and Cassius exacted money and men from the population, was no better. Both sides declared, however, that they were fighting for freedom (as the historian Appian remarked, the word "freedom"

was always attractive and always empty). The war ended in a defeat for Brutus and Cassius, who committed suicide.

Antony, the victor in the battle of Philippi, went east to settle the problems there. Lepidus was soon pushed into the background; Octavian, who received the western provinces, remained in Italy. Sextus Pompeius established himself in Sicily, where he recruited into his army the optimates and slaves that fled to him. His strong navy interfered with the transportation of grain supplies to Italy. The Parthians, taking advantage of Rome's weakness, seized Syria. It took Ventidius Bassus a great effort to drive away the Parthians in 39 B. C. In 36, Agrippa eliminated the threat from Sextus Pompeius, whose freedman Menas went over to Octavian, surrendering the fleet which he commanded. Octavian promised to respect the freedom of the slaves that had fought on Sextus Pompeius's side, but later sent them to different provinces and secretly ordered the governors of these provinces to disarm and seize them on the same day. Thirty thousand slaves were returned to their owners, and when it was impossible to establish who the slave's master was, the slave was executed. That act marked the beginning of Octavian's reconciliation with the propertied classes. He then stopped the proscriptions and, to consolidate his links with the senatorial aristocracy, he married Livia, the divorced wife of Tiberius Claudius Nero, an enemy of the triumvirs. Octavian and his retinue began to encourage the prophecies, that were current among the people, that the age of terrible misfortunes and disturbances would soon come to an end and a new Golden Age would arrive, owing to Octavian's deserts—an age of plenty, happiness and peace. His popularity grew, and all the inhabitants of Italy pledged allegiance to him.

But the pacification could not be complete as long as Antony remained ruler in the east. He became involved with Cleopatra, changed the rulers of vassal kingdoms at his will, and made gifts of land to his children by Cleopatra. Antony's abuses of power were played up by Octavian and his followers. Rumours were spread about Cleopatra's intention to become queen of Rome, about Antony being tied to her apron strings, etc.

War between Octavian and Antony became inevitable. It began in 32 B. C. and ended in a defeat of Antony and Cleopatra's fleet in September 31 in

the battle of Cape Actium in western Greece. Antony and Cleopatra sailed for Egypt, while Antony's troops, after waiting for him for several days on the sea coast, went over to Octavian, who promised to reward them as his own soldiers. In 30 B. C., Octavian arrived in Egypt and seized it without difficulty, making it a province subordinated to him. Antony and Cleopatra committed suicide.

Octavian became absolute ruler of the empire. The vast Egyptian booty enabled him to buy rather than take by force lands for his veterans. Some 300,000 received land allotments. Virtually all lands in Italy were redivided. Octavian's commanders and retainers received estates of several hundred *jugera*. In this way, large-scale estates, or *latifundia*, emerged. Medium- and small-scale holdings, based on the labour of slaves who were again beaten into submission, also grew stronger. The supreme right of disposing of land passed on to the head of the state, and land owners no longer feared new agrarian laws adopted by the plebs. Their ownership of land became just as solid as a master's ownership of his slaves. It was at that time that a new legal term, *dominium* (from *dominus* "master"), appeared.

Octavian now decided on a switch from the policy of terror to that of clemency (later called "satiated cruelty" by the philosopher Seneca). Thus a new period in the history of Rome began – the period of absolute rule or empire. Modern scholars have often discussed the question of whether this transition was a revolution. Some historians believe that the events that then happened can be regarded as signs of a revolution, while others object on the grounds that Roman society did not change its structure, remaining a slave-owning one. The Soviet researcher S. L. Utchenko pointed out that revolutions have occurred that did not involve a radical change of the dominant mode of production (e. g., the 1848 revolution in France) but did bring about considerable changes in the structure of the ruling class, in the political system and general trend of policy. The establishment of the empire was a victory for the class of municipal land- and slave-owners, and in part of the provinces, over the upper stratum of the landed aristocracy, as later policy of Octavian and his successors showed. From this viewpoint, the transition to empire can be described, in a sense, as a revolution.

## Chapter 17

### *The Roman Empire*

*Augustus's Principate.* Octavian became an undisputed master of what was in fact an empire. Then, in 27 B.C., he solemnly resigned his extraordinary powers and handed them back to the Senate and the people. He always insisted (particularly in a list of his services to the people) that the only things that distinguished him from other magistrates were his great moral authority (*auctoritas*) and the fact that he came first in the lists of the Senate. Hence his official title of princeps and the name "principate" for this system of power. In actual fact Octavian wielded absolute power—he was Imperator, i. e., supreme commander, for life; each year he was granted *tribunica potestas*, i. e., the powers of a tribune of the plebs; he had the right to propose candidates for the magistracies (he himself stood for and received consulship many times); and he had control of the treasury. The Senate voted him the cognomen "Augustus" ("exalted", "sacred"), which lent his power a sacral character. Since Caesar had been deified already at the time of the triumvirs and a temple had been built for him, Augustus was also son of the god, which was part of his titulature: *Imperator Caesar Augustus divi filius* "Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the god". In the Eastern provinces, shrines were built to him as they had been to Hellenistic kings. Towards the end of his life, altars were erected to him in Italy as well; the priests of his cult were called "augustals". Even before that, anniversaries of his victories, his own birthday and those of his relatives were marked in some cities by prayers to the gods and to Augustus himself. After the death of Lepidus, the triumvir who had been elected chief pontiff, Augustus assumed that dignity as well. Thus

Augustus and his successors, who inherited all his titles, wielded absolute civil, military and religious power.

The official view was that the Roman people transferred to Augustus and his successors its "power and majesty", thus handing over to them the supreme ownership of land and the right to dispose of it, and the power over the provinces which had previously been regarded the "property of the Roman people". Augustus and his adherents insisted that the republic had been restored. In those times, the Romans associated the republic with any form of government that upheld justice and benefited all. Augustus's rule was perceived as the end of the triumvirs' extraordinary powers and a restoration of the traditional system of government, although in actual fact the latter had undergone a radical change. The people who had embodied their power in the personality of the princeps formally remained sovereign, but everything that they had formerly owed to the civic community they now owed to the princeps. Augustus appointed many of his ardent followers members of the Senate, and it was now completely subordinated to him, although it was outwardly respected as the supreme organ of government (in actual fact, only unimportant issues were submitted to the Senate for discussion) and senators remained the highest privileged order of the Roman state. Various newly created offices were filled with equites; in particular, Egypt was governed by an equestrian prefect. Cicero's programme of uniting all the orders "for the benefit of all" was to all appearances implemented.

Augustus was a born statesman. Avoiding any dis-



play of power that might be construed as an insult to the Roman traditions and stressing, on the contrary, his modesty, moderation, and devotion to the ancient cults and customs, he skilfully used his power for the solution (however temporary) of the most pressing issues, in the first place for the setting up of a strong state apparatus. He organised the picked Italian-born troops in nine praetorian cohorts commanded by an equestrian prefect; these were the Guards, stationed in Rome and around it and intended to maintain public security. Praetorians served only 16 years, not 20, as all the other legionaries; they received higher pay and were often appointed centurions in the Roman legions. All this ensured their loyalty to the emperor. Besides, he set up three city police cohorts under the prefect of Rome whose duty it was to keep slaves and the plebs in check, and watchmen's cohorts for putting out fires and maintaining order at night. These units were sufficiently effective instruments of enforcing Augustus's laws against mutiny, preventing the arming of freemen and slaves as a preliminary to rebellions. After the provision of land for the veterans, the army was reduced to 25 legions consisting entirely of Roman citizens, which were stationed, together with the provincial units (infantry cohorts and cavalry *alae*) attached to them, along the empire's frontiers or in insufficiently pacified provinces. Legion commanders of senatorial rank, who were simultaneously provincial governors, were directly responsible to Augustus. The "peaceful" provinces, in which no troops were stationed, were formally under Senate administration, although Augustus actually controlled these, too. The prefects of the auxiliary units were of equestrian rank, but ordinary soldiers also had a chance of promotion, even to the rank of centurion, and centurions who won special distinction could be admitted to the equestrian order. Upon discharge, veterans received a grant of land and were exempt from taxes. In this way, men who were formerly branded as "ungodly soldiers" were tamed and made the basis of firm authority and order.

Although the popular assemblies in Rome lost in fact any significance whatever and were later discontinued entirely, Augustus, who had begun his career as Caesar's successor in the role of the leader of the *populares*, thought it expedient to win the favour of the plebs not only through largesses and spectacles

(of which the Secular Games were particularly splendid) but also through certain laws. The *lex Petelia* was revived, according to which an insolvent debtor had to give up his property to the creditor but remained free and retained possession of anything he might gain later. Permission was granted again to organise in Rome and other cities colleges of the Lares consisting of freemen, freedmen and slaves, with the proviso that they would also practise the cult of the genius of Augustus. In this way Augustus wanted to ensure the support and loyalty to the regime among the broad masses. A special permission was required, however, each time a cultic or craftsmen's college was set up; these were called "little men's" colleges, intended to provide decent burial to their members. The organisation of an unauthorised college was equated with armed seizure of a public building. Rigid control was thus imposed upon the plebs.

Augustus willingly promoted landowners from Italic cities to equestrian or even senatorial rank. The things they particularly liked about Augustus was his devotion to the ancient Roman virtues of *pietas*, *aequitas*, and *clementia* inscribed on a gold shield which the Senate presented to the princeps, and to the "customs of the ancestors", which was reflected, among other things, in his legislation aimed at consolidating the family ties that had grown weaker during the civil wars—the strict laws against adultery and privileges for fathers of three children. The opposition of Roman citizens to all non-citizens (the so-called "peregrines") was also in the spirit of the "customs of the ancestors". His laws directed against slaves occupy a special place in Augustus's legislation. The harshest of them was the so-called Silanian *senatus consultum* according to which, in the event of a master's violent death, all slaves under the same roof or within call who failed to come to his aid were subject to torture and execution. A person who helped a member of a proscribed family to flee was tried as a murderer, while anyone informing on a runaway received a reward. Realising at the same time that it was dangerous to drive slaves to extremes of discontent, Augustus prosecuted masters who cruelly tortured their slaves, and permitted slaves to seek asylum as the last resort (the Caesar temple had the right of asylum), the case later to be tried by magistrates. Setting an example to other slave-owners, Augustus treated his slaves mildly. He

set a policy that was later continued and developed by his successors: suppression of slaves not only by the power of the master but also by that of the state, curbing at the same time the slave-owners' abuses of their rights. In a way, slaves became subjects of the state, not just of their masters. To slow down the growth of the body of proletarian plebeians and to check the adulteration of their ranks by unreliable elements, Augustus regulated the manumission of slaves, setting the limit to the number of slaves that a master could set free (depending on the size of his family), to the age of the master (not less than 20) and of the slave to be released (not less than 30). If a slave had been branded or fettered for some offence, he received no Roman citizenship upon manumission. On the other hand, Augustus forbade the enslavement of freedmen and reduced their obligations to their former patrons.

Augustus's policy towards the provinces was of great importance. The role of the *publicani* was significantly limited. In some places, the taxes were collected, in accordance with the census taken in the provinces by Augustus's agents—slaves or freedmen. Assemblies of highly placed provincials received the right to complain about the abuses of the governors-general, and their complaints were investigated. Numerous colonies were founded in all the provinces. Old cities and individual provincials particularly loyal to Augustus were given various privileges. In this way a class was consolidated that was able to ensure the stability of Roman domination in the provinces. A lasting peace was yet another factor beneficial for Italy.

True, there *were* wars and rebellions in the provinces in Augustus's times. In Spain, the Cantabrians and the Asturians rose; the suppression of that uprising completed the subjugation of the Iberian peninsula. It took a great effort to put down the revolts of the Dalmatians and the Pannonians in Illyria. The Romans were completely routed by rebellious Germans in the battle of the Teutoburg forest, and they failed to establish their presence on German territory beyond the Elbe.

However, compared to the external and especially civil wars of the past, all these were relatively minor episodes, and Augustus proudly stated that with his rule the Golden Age of peace and prosperity came. Augustus had numerous admirers who enjoyed his patronage.

The Augustan age was the time of the flourishing of Roman culture, of literature in particular. The three great poets of that age—Virgil, Horace and Ovid—made an enormous impact on their contemporaries and descendants. Virgil (70-19 B.C.) came from Mantua. During the proscriptions he lost his estate but was given another by Augustus and became a member of the circle of the most talented authors under Maecenas, who was close to Augustus. Virgil published a collection of poems called the *Eclogues*, mostly devoted to love among shepherds and shepherdesses and showing some signs of the influence of Theocritus's *Idylls*. That was before the battle of Actium, but the poems of that book already reflected Virgil's admiration for Octavian as a beneficent divinity. Particularly famous is the fourth eclogue prophesying the birth of a divine child destined to introduce a new Golden Age on earth. (Despite the numerous attempts of both Roman and modern commentators to read the riddle of this mysterious child, it is still not known whom Virgil meant.) In response to Augustus's desire to restore agriculture ruined by the civil wars, Virgil later wrote the *Georgics*, a poem on country life. Advice on agriculture alternated in it with descriptions of Italian scenery, appeals to the country gods, and profound meditations. Particularly interesting are Virgil's ideas on the Iron Age of Jupiter succeeding the Golden Age of Saturn. Under Saturn, when nature itself provided everything that men needed, they led a carefree life; but Jupiter decided that they must learn to toil, think and invent the crafts and arts that would improve their lives. Virgil's most famous work was his *Aeneid*, recounting the wanderings of Aeneas and his son Iulus, Aeneas's love for Dido, the queen of Carthage, his abandonment of her at the orders from Jupiter, who intended him to become the founder of Rome, Aeneas's arrival in Italy, his war against the Latins and the other Italic tribes, his victory and marriage to Lavinia, daughter of king Latinus. The high poetic quality of the *Aeneid*, the author's thorough knowledge of ancient traditions, beliefs and rites, as well as of the philosophical theories of the origin of the universe, ensured its unprecedented success among the poet's contemporaries and later generations. But the main point of the poem was the merging of the "Roman myth" with the nascent "Augustan myth". With the aid of the Cumaean sybil, Aeneas descends

to the underworld to question his father Anchises about the future. Anchises reveals to him his own destiny and that of Rome, which would be founded by Aeneas's descendants and would rule all the peoples, merciful to the obedient and harsh on the recalcitrant. Anchises shows to Aeneas the souls of Roman kings and heroes awaiting incarnation, including Augustus, the greatest descendant of Iulus who will carry out and complete Rome's mission. Virgil died before he could accomplish the *Aeneid*, but even in this unfinished form it became the most popular work in Roman literature.

Horace (65-8 B.C.) came from the family of a freedman of modest means who managed to provide an excellent education for his son. Having fought at Philippi on the side of Brutus and Cassius, he was for a long time in disgrace, but later he was accepted, through the good offices of Virgil, at Maecenas's circle and received the gift of a small farm. Horace's work is noted for the extreme diversity of the style and meter of his poems (he himself wrote that Romans surpassed in this respect their Greek teachers who had brought the arts to "rural Latium") as well as of his subjects. Horace was a typical representative of his times, his work reflecting the complexity and contradictions of the spiritual life of that epoch. He sang the praises of the old times, of simple life in the womb of nature, and the unsophisticated rural festivals, but at the same time he acknowledged that he could not live far from the Rome of Augustus, so different from that of Romulus, that he suffered whenever Maecenas failed to invite him, and that he craved fame. His poems were a mixture of Epicurean appeals to enjoy the fleeting moments without a thought for the future and of Stoic insistence on harsh virtue. He also wrote *Satires* on the vices and fads of Roman society. Horace held high the mission of poetry and poets, whose duty it was to correct the mores and to instruct and entertain the public. Combining talent and erudition, the poet must incessantly toil and strive for perfection, for "neither the gods nor the people nor booksellers could stand mediocrity" in poetry. Just as other poets, Horace adulated Augustus, glorifying him as a deity. For the Secular Games, he wrote a hymn, sung by choirs of youths and maidens, in honour of Apollo whom Augustus worshipped particularly, imploring him that there should be nothing greater under the sun than Rome,

and that the gods should grant Rome and Augustus eternal happiness.

Ovid (43 B.C.-A.D. 17) was a younger contemporary of Virgil and Horace. He won fame through his love poems and the *Metamorphoses*, a long poem on the transfiguration of men into animals and plants ending with the transformation of deified Caesar into a star. Ovid's *Art of Love*, with its instructions for courtship, seduction and strengthening the ties of love, incurred the displeasure of Augustus who saw it as a mockery of his marriage laws, but the young nobles, who found those laws very irksome, liked the poem very much. Augustus banished Ovid to the town of Tomis on the Black Sea. From Tomis, the poet wrote sad epistles to Rome describing his hard life among the barbarians and pleading for pardon, which never came.

The "Roman myth" was reflected not only in the classically perfect *Aeneid* but also in a history of Rome written by Livy (Titus Livius) of Patavium (Padua). Little of the *History* has survived, but even from the extant text we can form a clear conception of the authors' intention to show that the Romans elevated their small town on the Tiber to the status of the world's ruler through their valour, patriotism, resilience in recovering from their worst defeats, and through worshipping the gods and their patronage. In that same period, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek living in Rome, wrote his *Roman Antiquities*, a study of the first stages in the history of Rome in which he endeavoured to show the community of Roman and Greek cults and institutions. Of the great many other literary scholarly works of the Augustan age only a few have survived, including Vitruvius's treatise *On Architecture*, Strabo's *Geography*, containing a description of all the countries then known, the *Bibliotheca historica* by Diodorus Siculus, and some others. The men who surveyed lands assigned to the colonies in Italy and the provinces under Augustus, wrote books on the various methods of land surveying and measurement, the rules for the assignment of land to cities, villages and *pagi*, and for compiling inventories of private and public lands as well as for drawing plans of cities marking the boundaries of lands of different categories. Agrippa, Augustus's closest associate and husband of his daughter Julia, took part in drawing the map of the western provinces. Augustus highly valued educated persons, who were accepted at his court even if they

were freedmen, like Hyginus, the author of numerous works. Augustus was the first to establish a public library in Rome after the Greek model, where disputations and public readings of books by their authors were arranged, apart from the usual library functions.

A great many construction projects were carried out in Augustus's time. "I found Rome built of bricks; I leave her clothed in marble," Augustus boasted—quite justifiably. New temples were erected, and the Forum was rebuilt. Augustus built himself a palace on the Palatine Hill. With money out of his own purse, Agrippa raised the Pantheon, a "temple of all the gods", which was later made a Christian church and has survived to the present times. It was also Agrippa who built the Roman aqueduct to supply water for the residencies of the nobility and the public reservoirs. One of the magnificent works undertaken at the time was the "altar of peace" in honour of August, with splendid reliefs portraying the goddess of the Earth, the goddess of Peace, and various symbols of affluence and prosperity. Indeed it might appear to both Romans and provincials, who still remembered the misfortunes of the civil wars, that Augustus, the beneficent deity, brought them peace and happiness for all time to come.

There was, however, a great danger in this mood, a danger that became quite obvious under Augustus's successors. All the aspirations of society seemed to have been satisfied, all the slogans under which its various strata fought became the slogans of the official propaganda. The idea of the inevitability of the existing state of things that might change in detail but not in the essentials took root in the minds of the public, and that led to the loss of the realisation of the collective social goals of the Roman community by its members, to a sense of alienation, estrangement and disruption of links between individuals, followed by a feverish search for the lost integrity, unity and harmony.

*The Empire in the 1st and 2nd Centuries A.D.* All this surfaced under Augustus's successors, when it became clear that the system Augustus had built, whatever its advantages over the senatorial republic, was by no means as perfect as his close associates had believed.

Augustus, who had no sons, wanted to appoint

Agrippa, his son-in-law, his heir, and after the latter's death, the sons of Agrippa and Julia. But these, too, died before Augustus, and he had to adopt Tiberius, Livia's son from her first marriage, whom he disliked despite his reputation as a talented military leader. At Augustus's death in 14 A.D. (on his deathbed, he is said to have asked certain ex-consuls, "Have I played my part in the farce of life creditably enough?", and when they assented, he told them, "Then send me off with a good clap"), Tiberius became his successor. Augustus was deified, and all strata of society participated in his cult, as they did in the cults of the later deified emperors. The office of a priest of the imperial cult was regarded as the height of a provincial or city politician's career.

The beginning of Tiberius's reign was inauspicious. The legions stationed on the Danube and the Rhine mutinied immediately on his accession, demanding land for the veterans and payment of salary arrears. The campaigns of Tiberius's nephew Germanicus beyond the Rhine were failures. The Gauls and later the Numidians rebelled. The revolts were crushed, but the Senate opposition, that had not dared to move under Augustus, raised its head. Tiberius was accused of haughtiness and of trampling freedom. Some senators could not reconcile themselves to the loss of their former privileged positions, particularly in the provinces, or to the fact that the Roman treasury had ceased to be their property. Tiberius responded with reprisals, relying on the law of *lèse-majesté*. People were now punished not only for mutiny or treason but also for words and actions insulting to the princeps. Many senators were executed, and their confiscated property passed on to the emperor. The greatest atrocities were committed by Sejanus, prefect of the praetorians, but he was later found guilty of conspiracy against the emperor, executed and thrown into the Tiber.

That was the beginning of the fight, which lasted throughout the 1st century A.D., between the senatorial opposition and the emperors, first of the Julio-Claudian dynasty of the relatives of Augustus and Tiberius, and later of the Flavian dynasty. Our data about those times mostly come from the works of authors who either belonged to the senatorial opposition or lived already in the 2nd century, when the new, Antonine dynasty came to power, which broke officially with the policies of their predecessors. The principal of these authors are the historian Tacitus,

Suetonius, the biographer of the first twelve Caesars, and the trenchant satirist Juvenal. Their positions determined, for many centuries to come, the attitude to the emperors and the society of the 1st century. The former were portrayed as despots whom absolute power corrupted to the point of madness, while society was described as consisting of servile and adulating senators ready to inform one on the other in order to curry favour with the emperors, only a handful of the senators daring to signify their protest by silence.

According to that tradition, Tiberius, a cruel, vile old man, was strangled in A.D. 37 by Macro, prefect of the praetorians, and Gaius Caesar, nicknamed Caligula, one of the few relatives of Tiberius whom he had not executed, became emperor. That bloodthirsty madman put to death many noblemen without any guilt whatever, and was finally assassinated (A.D. 41) by Cassius Chaerea, a praetorian tribune who could no longer stand his taunts. The praetorians proclaimed Claudius, Germanicus's brother, emperor. Tiberius had left Claudius alive because he had expected no danger from that quiet crank completely immersed in the study of antiquities. As emperor, he became a plaything in the hands of his wives (first Messalina, notorious for her profligacy, and then the imperious and ambitious Agrippina) and of his freedmen, who grew unbelievably rich and arrogant. Agrippina induced Claudius to adopt Nero, her son from her first marriage with Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus, married Nero to Claudius's daughter Octavia and, after some preparatory work, poisoned Claudius (A.D. 54). The praetorian guard proclaimed Nero, then sixteen, emperor. At first, under the beneficent influence of the philosopher Seneca, his tutor, he ruled in harmony with the Senate, but later his vicious nature asserted itself. Intent on marrying the beautiful but depraved Poppaea Sabina, he murdered Octavia and sent assassins to his mother, whose domination he came to resent; but first he poisoned Claudius's son Britannicus. After the assassination of his mother, he did not dare to leave his mansion for Rome for a long time, fearing that matricide would make him odious to the Romans. But when the Senate received him with great honours upon his return, he exclaimed, "Before this, no princeps has known just how far he might go." His relations with the Senate deteriorated. He made all kinds of shady

characters his closest associates. A conspiracy against him, betrayed by a slave, was used as a pretext for mass reprisals, executions and confiscations. Among the victims were Seneca, the poet Lucan, known for his praise of Julius Caesar's enemies in his poem the *Pharsalia*, and Petronius, author of the *Satyricon*—a picturesque novel describing the adventures of three rascals and a feast given by Trimalchio, a rich, vulgar and extremely ignorant freedman, the whole being, according to contemporary report, a parody of Nero and his court. The adherents of the "ancestors' customs" were particularly outraged by Nero's passion for poetry, music, and the theatre. Nero composed poems and songs, appeared on the stage, and went on a tour of Greece to take part in artistic competitions there. The Senate made sacrifices in honour of his "divine voice", while the people applauded Nero's performance and sang his songs. In the end, however, the provinces rebelled ruined by the high taxes Nero exacted to pay for his amusements and extensive construction projects, such as the Golden House—a magnificent palace that he built for himself, and the rebuilding of Rome almost completely destroyed by the fire of A.D. 64 (started by Nero himself, according to some accounts). To stop the unrest caused by these rumours, the fire was blamed on the Christians, then a new sect in Rome, who were thereupon subjected to harsh reprisals. In the Christian literature, Nero figured as an impious man, a servant of Antichrist or even Antichrist himself. In 68, Gaul, Spain and Africa rose against Nero. The Roman troops stationed in the provinces allied themselves with the local population, proposing Galba, Otho or Vitellius for emperor. A mass uprising broke out in Judea even before that, in A.D. 66. Vespasian, sent to suppress it, was proclaimed emperor by his troops. Praetorians also deserted Nero. The Senate, taking courage, deposed him; Nero fled from Rome and ordered a freedman who had followed him to kill him.

A civil war began between the claimants to the throne, each of which ruled for a few months only. The outcome was decided by the army on the Danube, which supported Vespasian (in full, Titus Flavius Vespasianus). He took Rome, and the Senate proclaimed him Emperor. His son Titus, relying on the upper classes of Judea, which were frightened by the extreme radical direction of the popular masses' uprising, ended the Judean war



seized Jerusalem, and got hold of immense spoils of war and great numbers of enslaved war captives. Simultaneously, Vespasian's general, Q. Petillius Cerialis, suppressed an uprising in Gaul headed by Gaius Julius Civilis, chieftain of the Batavians. Roman historians treated Vespasian more favourably than Nero or other emperors. Born in the Sabine country near Reate, of a humble family, he began his career in the army, ultimately becoming an experienced general and skilful administrator. Vespasian admitted Italic citizens to the Senate, and was commended for the modest life-style of these new senators and even of himself which set an example for the Roman aristocracy. But he, too, had to cope with some opposition, punishing certain philosophers who favoured the opposition circles, in particular the well-known Stoic Helvidius Priscus.

Vespasian died in A. D. 79 and was succeeded by Titus, who only ruled for two years, being in his turn succeeded by Vespasian's younger son Domitian – yet another tyrant in the eyes of the senatorial opposition. Accusations of high treason, reprisals, executions and confiscations again became the order of the day, especially after an attempt in 89 by Antonius Saturninus, legate of the army of the Rhine, to become emperor through rebellion. Informers, both freemen and slaves, were encouraged with high rewards. Domitian, a haughty and gloomy man, insisted on being regarded as Minerva's son and incessantly glorified. Later, senator Pliny the Younger recalled that whenever the Senate convened, even if it were to discuss a minor question like the setting up of a firebrigade, it began its decree with an enumeration of Domitian's great merits and triumphs. Anyone not doing his share of the glorification was suspect. The opposition grew especially strong after the crushing defeat inflicted on the Romans on the Danube by Decebalus, king of Dacia. In 96, Domitian was killed by two of his freedmen, and Marcus Cocceius Nerva, a creature of the Senate, was proclaimed emperor. A new epoch began, which was known in the senatorial historiography as the "Golden Age of the Antonines" (the dynasty was named after emperor Antoninus Pius).

But were the Julio-Claudian and Flavian periods indeed as dark as they were painted? The personalities of the emperors apart, it must be recognised that the tendencies initiated by Augustus continued to develop in that epoch, and considerable progress

was achieved in various fields. Many accusations on the part of the senatorial opposition were no more than a reflection of its own conservatism. Thus the opposition demanded a continuation of harsh policies towards the provinces. Under Claudius, the Romans conquered and made a province of the part of Britain in which a pro-Roman party, nonexistent under Caesar, emerged. But the atrocities of the Roman military settlers at Camulodunum, and the practice of enslaving debtors by Roman creditors (of whom, incidentally, Seneca was one) led to an uprising of the Iceni tribe led by the queen Boadicea (properly Boudicca). The Senate demanded a war to exterminate all the rebels, and was extremely indignant at the government's concessions and offers of peace to them. The government wanted to Romanise at least the upper stratum of the Britons, making them its supporters. As the Roman power in the provinces lost its harshness, it gained in stability. Vespasian gave Latin rights to the cities of Spain, and now each occupant of a city magistracy there received Roman citizenship. The influx of provincials to the equestrian and senatorial orders grew, and the cities of Italy and of the provinces flourished.

The Senate was also dissatisfied with the emperors' foreign policy, finding it insufficiently rigid. When Tiberius recalled Germanicus from the Rhine, realising that further advance into German territory was impossible, and resorted to diplomacy, setting some German tribes against others and appointing kings ready to obey Rome, the senators declared that he was simply envious of the successes of his nephew. They also condemned the policy towards Parthia. Augustus concluded an honourable peace with Parthia, recovering the Roman eagles the Parthians had captured from Crassus, but under Nero war to influence strategically important Armenia broke out again. Carbulo, the Senate's favourite, prosecuted the war with all the resoluteness of the generals from the times of the "ancestors", but the government was in favour of a reasonable settlement here as well: Tiridates, a creature of Parthia, was recognised as the king of Armenia, but he received his crown from Nero's hands, in Rome. The client kingdoms of Thrace, Mauretania, and Comagene were made provinces without much trouble, except for an uprising in Mauretania. The administration of Pannonia, Dalmatia, Moesia and



Noricum, formerly included in Illyria, was reorganised.

Under Claudius and Domitian, service in the auxiliary units was regulated: provincials had to serve for 25 to 26 years, whereupon they and the children born by their concubines received Roman citizenship, assignments of land and veterans' privileges, all of which made service in the army attractive for them. The veterans of the legions and of auxiliary forces stationed in provincial cities reinforced the class of decurions, which was the carrier of Roman methods of economic organisation, Roman mode of life, and Roman culture; in short, decurions were the agents of the Romanisation of the provinces. The opposition also protested against the influence of emperors' freedmen. But the empire's administrative apparatus consisted in part of such freedmen—as well as slaves. Claudius set a number of departments to handle appeals to the emperor as the highest instance, and to keep books, manage archives, etc. All these departments were run by freedmen and staffed by slaves. Imperial freedmen and slaves were also sent to the provinces, where they were mostly employed in the financial departments and managed the crown estates, which constantly grew through confiscations. The governors and their small staff did not stay in any one place long, being constantly transferred from province to province; they had but a poor grasp of the local situation and of the administrative procedures. The emperors' slaves and freedmen, together with the veterans, were reliable proponents of Roman policies and official ideology. Thus, they initiated various steps to demonstrate their loyalty to the imperial regime, building statues for the principes and organising the colleges of the cult of Augustus and the other deified emperors (apart from Augustus, the emperors Claudius, Vespasian and Titus were deified in the 1st century), and the cults of their Lares, Genii, etc. Many of these freedmen used their position as a source of gain, becoming very rich men. Provincial businessmen and governors also made fortunes. Highly placed officials sent their freedmen and slaves to the provinces, where they went into wholesale trade and usury, enriching themselves and their patrons.

The government and the senatorial opposition also differed considerably on the agrarian question. Becoming the supreme owner of land, the emperor

could dispose of it in any way he pleased, as the city community had once been in a position to do. The old law, according to which abandoned land became the property of the person who began to till it, regardless of who the previous owner had been, remained in force throughout the existence of the empire, but the emperor's right was not challenged either. True, the Senate believed that the "tyrants" exercised that right much too extensively. Indeed, they could confiscate lands (mostly badly tilled or entirely abandoned latifundia), dividing them into lots granted to the emperor's supporters. Sometimes the lands of major landowners (mostly in the provinces, it seems) were distributed among small farmers. A "good" emperor could not, in the Senate's view, act that way. Let the emperor own everything, said Pliny the Younger, addressing himself to Trajan, but those who possessed the lands assigned to them must remain their owners. In a word, the senators demanded that the emperor's authority as the suzerain, as head of state, should be separated from his authority as the supreme owner of land.

But the emperors paid a great deal of attention to the agrarian policy, as can be seen, for instance, from Vespasian's decree that took away the public lands from rich men who had seized them and handed them over to small farmers. The right to use neighbouring grazing lands, to use sand and lime from neighbouring holdings, water cattle there, etc., was also established in the interests of small farmers. Support for small- and medium-scale farmers at the expense of the latifundia was part of the emperors' agrarian policy.

Certain alarming symptoms appeared at that time in Italy's agriculture. The Soviet researcher V. I. Kuzishchin has shown that several types of holdings evolved at that time: farms, or villas, in the neighbourhood of cities, often specialising in produce for the city market; farms remote from cities, mostly engaged in mixed natural economy; latifundia, based on extensive economy and combining land cultivation, livestock-breeding and the handicrafts (at potters', fullers', metal workers' and other workshops). The theory of rationally conducting a relatively large estate (not a latifundium, though) was developed by Columella, who endeavoured to prove that such a farm could yield a great income, comparable to that from usury, provided all the

requirements of agronomy for the tilling and fertilising the soil, cultivating the plants, and organising the work of slaves were satisfied. But the ideas of Columella's treatise were mostly utopian. The level of production on such farms would demand highly skilled and attentive workers capable of initiative. In Columella's view, however, such workers were unreliable and inclined towards rebellion. A good vine-grower, costing 8,000 sesterces, was obstreperous and disobedient because of his skills and knowledge; he had to be driven to work in fetters and locked up in the house dungeon, the *ergastulum*, for the night. It was only natural under these conditions that the worker had no desire to exercise his knowledge and skills; Columella complained that neither he nor any of his neighbours could make the vine-growers carefully divide the vines into varieties. It was therefore necessary to increase the number of overseers, which swallowed up a considerable part of the surplus product. But that was not very effective either, for the *villicus*, an overseer of an estate, was expected by Columella to have not only a wide-ranging knowledge of agriculture but also an exceptional loyalty to his master—a commodity that would be hard to come by.

On farms remote from the market, where slaves enjoyed a relative freedom and had their own huts, families and a few head of cattle, the situation was better. On the *latifundia*, attempts to use the labour of hundreds of fettered slaves resulted in enormous expenditure on managerial staff. The use of some primitive machines like reapers and mowers saved labour but wasted a great deal of the harvest. The desire to save labour resulted in untimely and negligent performance of various operations, like the pruning of vines. All treatises of those times speak of an extremely wasteful use of land on *latifundia*, so that the emperors who confiscated and divided them into small lots proceeded from practical considerations that were as weighty as those of the times of the Gracchi.

It was not only the government that was concerned with the difficult economic situation in the empire. It was now clear to many people that slave labour, which had promoted progress when production was primitive enough, became a drag on it as it grew more complex. These tendencies were observed not only in agriculture but also in the crafts, increasing with the growing specialisation of production

and higher demands of buyers and customers. Large-scale enterprises using slave labour failed. Thus workshops using the labour of 100 to 150 slaves in the production of ceramics folded after a short while; large workshops producing brick and tiles, that were concentrated in the hands of the emperors at the beginning of the 2nd century, began to disintegrate into smaller units. Everything turned on the need to carry the large expenses of overseeing the slaves.

Sober, practical men looked for a way out in such measures as leasing part of their land to the *villici* or, in smaller lots, to colons for a fixed rent (in money or in kind) or part of the harvest; leasing parts of workshops (such as kilns); forming associations whose members (often freedmen of one patron) divided the workshop among themselves; and offering incentives to the most skilled slaves by assigning a *peculium* to them in the form of shops or workshops together with tools and slaves, and letting them manage their business on their own.

Theoreticians like Seneca suggested the restructuring of the relations between masters and slaves after the model of the relations between patrons and clients; Pliny the Elder believed it necessary to revert to small holdings that could be tilled by small families. Poets and writers did their best to implant the ideas of mutual love between masters and slaves, invoking instances of loyalty of some slaves for their masters, whom they saved at the time of proscriptions and other misfortunes. But none of these appeals were very effective, for it was practically impossible to offer incentives to all slaves. The leases merely increased production costs. Naturally, slaves continued to hate their masters, they ran away, and often killed their owners, despite the rigidly enforced Silanian *senatus consultum*.

The signs of crisis appeared first of all in the old slave-owning regions of Italy. On the contrary, Cisalpine Gaul, where there were many peasants, and where large estates were mostly tilled by colons, not slaves, flourished. By the end of the 1st century, most of the praetorians and legionaries, as well as senators, came from Cisalpine Gaul. The policy of the emperors of the 1st century thus marked the beginning of efflorescence of the provinces, which had fallen into decay under senatorial rule, and not of Italy itself.

The senatorial opposition constantly complained

about the loss of liberty, glorifying Cicero, Cassius, Brutus, and Cato Uticensis as real fighters for freedom. At the same time Tacitus, Seneca and other ideologues of the opposition held that absolute rule was inevitable, and their one wish was to have a "good" emperor, a philosopher on the throne. Others believed that one should pray the gods to send a good princeps and bear with bad ones, as we endure thunderstorms or hail. In the 1st century, the reprisals mostly fell on the upper sections of the senatorial order, while the citizens of Italic and provincial cities enjoyed greater freedom and willingly spent money on municipal needs, hoping for promotion for themselves and their children. At the same time the overall climate was one of tolerance. Even books by persons subject to reprisals were not destroyed. Anyone could believe in any gods whatever or follow no faith at all, provided he performed the rites of the imperial cult; anyone could adhere to any philosophical doctrine, provided it did not entail *lèse-majesté*. But the general "spirit of freedom" was illusory. The decurion estate, which profited greatly from the establishment of the empire, believed that excessive freedom was conducive to unrest. Plutarch, who came from a small Greek city of Chaeronea, wrote in his instructions for city magistrates on the proper way to conduct the affairs that the emperors offered enough freedom for the cities, and there was no need for more. In his speeches to the people he insisted that it was better to remember the sad consequences of rebellions than to dwell on the great past of the Greeks. The plebs ousted from political life, lost its interest in such life entirely. When one princeps succeeds another, wrote Phaedrus, Tiberius's freedman and fable writer who was very close to the people, nothing but the master's name changes for the little man.

The painful awareness of lack of freedom was shared by various sections of society. It stemmed not so much from the policies of the emperors as from the absence of common goals, increasing dependence of the upper strata on the emperors, of provincials on governors and imperial officials, of colons on landowners, of artisans' and other colleges on the patrons that now regulated all aspects of their lives, and of each little man on his superior, who expected him to be respectful and servile. The dependence was both material and moral. The emperors demanded that their subjects should praise their

virtues and the happiness they brought to the people. City magistrates and patrons of colleges expected the citizens to glorify their deeds and to put up their statues with grateful inscriptions. Setting up colleges in their homes and on their estates, the masters demanded signs of loyalty and submission from the members of these colleges—freedmen, slaves and clients. The intellectuals were especially sensitive to their dependence on their rich patrons, who were often vulgar and ignorant.

Under favourable circumstances, there was a chance of promotion and enrichment for men of different strata: thus a senator could become a governor of a province and even member of the princeps's council, after holding a number of magistracies; a knight could rise to be a prefect of Egypt or prefect of the praetorian guard; a decurion could become a knight; a time-expired peregrine soldier could become a Roman citizen and a decurion; a slave could receive a *peculium*, buy his freedom, get rich, and his children would be freemen. However, anyone who stood out in any way inspired suspicion and mistrust. Emperors were afraid of senators renowned for their wealth, talents, or education, as their probable rivals. In the cities, the rivalry and intrigues among candidates for various magistracies were unending. The position of the common people is best described in the catchword: "It is dangerous for a lowly man to surpass others in any art." Finally, no one could be certain of what the next day might bring. The disfavour of the emperor, the patron or master, litigation or denunciation could deprive a person at one stroke of everything that he had attained.

Men who rejected all this strove for ways to retain at least their spiritual freedom and a sense of inner independence and self-respect. These were the precepts of the Stoics, of whom Seneca and the former slave Epictetus were the most outstanding proponents. They wrote of the unity of the world imbued with the supreme world reason, or world soul, uniting all that is; of the justice of the laws established by nature itself; and of the duty of each individual to follow the natural necessity reigning in the world, to bring one's wishes in harmony with that necessity, to perform one's duty to the fellow citizens and the entire mankind, and to play conscientiously one's role in the "world drama", condemning nothing and complaining of nothing. Things exter-

nal, they taught, are beyond our control, but they have no significance; the only significant things are the inner "I" and the inner virtue remaining immutable in all the peripeteias of destiny. Epictetus stressed in particular that only a person independent from the material world could be free. He said that he who could give us all we want and take away all to which we are attached would always be master. However, he who despised riches and the body, and had neither desires nor attachments, could give up his body and life to the tyrant but would not permit him to direct his ideas and judgement. The wise man must entrust himself to the gods and live according to divine laws, and not for earthly pleasures; he would not then be afraid of earthly rulers and masters.

In the 1st century A. D., some of the Stoics close to the senatorial opposition were subjected to reprisals, but during the 2nd century the Antonines encouraged Stoicism, and it became very popular.

Epicureanism, on the other hand, lost its attractiveness. Epitaphs in the Epicurean spirit, urging men to enjoy life, as there was nothing to be expected after death, became more and more pessimistic, stressing the ultimate utter destruction. At the same time the faith in the immortality of the soul, previously quite uncharacteristic of Romans, became stronger. There were more and more epitaphs expressing the hope that the deceased's soul was alive, enjoying bliss, as a reward for his virtuous life, in communion with the gods in Elysium—and that he himself might be a god. The cults and mysteries of Dionysus, Isis and Osiris, and later of the Iranian god Mithra spread among the upper and middle classes. Those initiated in the mysteries hoped to grasp the secrets of the universe and achieve immortality. The common people remained true to the Roman gods but showed a preference for those which were least connected with the official cult, such as the forest godlet Silvanus, who grew in the eyes of the plebs and slaves into a powerful god the creator and at the same time great worker and helper of workers. Hercules, included among the gods for his labours for the benefit of the people, was also very popular. The importance of religion grew, and the search for a god worthy of worship, to whom one might entrust one's whole life, became more and more intense.

The emperors of the Antonine dynasty—Nerva,

Trajan, Hadrian, Antoninus Pius, and Marcus Aurelius, all of them deified after death—resolutely condemned the "tyrants" that preceded them, giving up reprisals and achieving a reconciliation with the Senate. By that time, the Senate itself and its claims had changed. The majority of the Senate were no longer members of the old aristocracy but newcomers from Italian cities and the provinces who laid no claim to a share of the profit from the exploitation of the provinces, and who recognized the monarchy without qualification. Significantly, the emperors of that dynasty were born in the provinces: Trajan and Hadrian in Spain, and Antoninus Pius in Gaul. The Antonines' dynastic policy also satisfied the Senate: rather than leaving the throne to chosen members of their family, they adopted as their heirs men that were popular in the army and approved by the Senate. Thus Nerva adopted Trajan (98-117), whom Roman historians regarded as an ideal ruler. He routed Decebalus and made Dacia with its fertile lands and rich gold mines a Roman province. His successful wars with Parthia considerably extended Roman possessions in the East. He was generous with all kinds of handouts to the plebs; he arranged splendid games that ran for several days on end, and set up alimentary institutions to help the poor—landowners needing money mortgaged their lands, and then the state used the interest on the loans to help needy parents educate their children. Trajan went so far in his condemnation of "tyrants" that, handing the sword to the prefect of the praetorians, he said: "Use it to defend me if I rule well, and against me, if I rule badly." This apparently sanctioned the right to assassinate "tyrants". Trajan's successor Hadrian (117-138) was famous for his erudition, his patronage of philosophers, scholars, orators and writers, his love for Greek culture and antiquities, his attention for the provinces, which he kept touring, his extensive construction projects, and democratic conduct in public: he used to walk about Rome on foot and talk to the people he met without ceremony. Antoninus Pius (138-161) was popular as a just ruler renowned for his piety (hence the cognomen). Finally, Marcus Aurelius (161-180), the last Stoic of antiquity of any distinction, was seen as precisely that type of philosopher on the throne of whom both Greeks and Romans had dreamed.

Under the Antonines, the empire reached the

peak of its economic development. Construction techniques were greatly improved. The Flavian amphitheatre, or Colosseum, Hadrian's mausoleum and villa, Titus's triumphal arch and other magnificent edifices were built at that time. After the conquest of Dacia, the architect Apollodorus built a 1.5-km-long bridge across the Danube. The art of mosaic ornamentation of public and private buildings, and the production of glass ware developed. Agriculture, crafts and construction made rapid advances in the provinces; education and art, which followed Greek and Roman models, received a fresh impetus. Road construction, well-organised navigation and the building of harbours strengthened commercial links between the provinces, as well as between the empire and other countries and peoples—Transrhenish and Transdanubian tribes, Arabia, India, and even China, to some extent. Both luxury goods and agricultural and craftsmen's products intended for the mass market were imported and exported. Some areas specialised in certain commodities. Thus Spain exported metals, olive oil, and fishery products; Italy, wine and pottery; Africa, grain and olives; Asia Minor and Syria, fabrics, jewelry, etc. Provincial cities received the status of colonies and municipia, and the number of provincials attaining Roman citizenship grew. There was a great deal of activity in the cities. Magistrates, who had to pay certain sums for the honour of filling their posts, decurions, and rich freedmen (that were members of the estate of *seviri augustales*, which served the imperial cult) were those who paid for the building of temples, circuses, theatres, market-places, bath-houses, and aqueducts, paved streets, and held games and feasts for the people; patrons of colleges gave the latter gifts of buildings for assemblies, money for treats and handouts on the birthdays of emperors, patrons themselves and their relatives. Festivals in honour of the gods were accompanied by solemn processions which made, in the words of Plutarch, the common people, even slave women, feel their own importance. Provincial intellectuals also made a considerable contribution to the common Graeco-Roman culture. The poet Martial was born in Spain; the writer and philosopher Apuleius, in Africa; the historian Appian, in Alexandria; the famous satirist Lucian, in Syria; and the orator and philosopher Dio Chrysostom, in Asia Minor. Many prominent lawyers, who sometimes occupied

high posts, were provincials, too. Mathematicians, astronomers, geographers and physicians were active in the famous scholarly institutions of Pergamum and Alexandria. Such great men of antique science as the physician Galen and the astronomer Ptolemy worked in that period.

The position of slaves improved under the Antonines, although the Silanian *senatus consultum* was not abolished, and under Trajan it was even extended to the murdered man's freedmen. However, the masters were deprived of the right to execute slaves, lock them up in *ergastula*, fetter them for life, or send them to the mines and gladiator schools. The slaves of cruel masters could appeal to magistrates with a request to sell them to less harsh owners. Slaves guilty of grave criminal offences punishable by death or hard labour were tried by the courts. All this signified a further development of the tendency, started by Augustus, to make slaves, to some extent at least, the state's subjects. The slaves' rights to their *peculia*, and their actual legal capability ("in natural law") to be a party to bargains were consolidated. Slaves' family ties were also actually recognized; some of the richer slaves married free women, and lawyers even considered suits involving dowries received by such slaves' wives. Where there was doubt as to the slave's right to freedom (an obscure will or other document or condition of manumission, etc.), slaves were given the benefit of the doubt by decree. The exercise of the patrons' rights to their freedmen's various obligations (to work for their former masters, to leave them part of their property in their wills, to maintain an impoverished patron) was also controlled. The law especially supported well-to-do freedmen and slaves who owned large *peculia* and, without changing their legal status, already actually passed into the class of owners of means of production and even of slaves, as the latter could be employed in the *peculia*. Imperial bureaucracy was further consolidated under the Antonines. Although the state apparatus was still staffed by the emperors' slaves and freedmen, the principal offices were now entrusted to knights, with salaries appropriate to their rank.

However, processes were already maturing which ultimately put an end to this epoch of efflorescence. The empire's socioeconomic structure was not uniform, comprising as it did various social structures which developed in different ways and at dif-

ferent rates. In the last centuries of the republic and the first centuries of the empire, the city communities, with their public and private lands, precisely delimited and entered in land-survey records, with their slave-owners' farms, well-developed crafts and trade, with the underlying principle of the work of each citizen, to the extent of his means and abilities, being aimed at the common weal, and with the antique culture synthesising Greek and Roman traditions, formed the dominant structure. The principal antagonistic classes here were slave-owners and slaves, whose relations determined the state of the economy; owners of small holdings in the cities, of craftsmen's workshops, and shops also played a considerable role, as a class. The cities varied in their size, character, and importance. Apart from Rome itself with its population of more than a million, there were such large rich centres of trade, crafts and culture as Antioch and Palmyra in Syria, Alexandria and Carthage in Africa, Arelate, Nemausus, Narbo Martius, and Lugudumun in Gaul, Gades, Tarragona and Carthago Nova in Spain, Ephesus, and many others, where rich landowners and merchants lived.

Another structure, not very prominent in the first centuries, was represented by consanguine and rural communities—villages, *pagi*, and neighbourhoods, which continued to exist even in the north of Italy and were more or less numerous in various areas of the western and eastern provinces. These communities collectively owned tracts of land within or outside city boundaries, which they divided among its members; they were also collectively responsible for the taxes imposed on the members. The communities had their own popular assemblies, officials (sometimes subordinated to the city magistracies), cults (partly surviving from the pre-Roman times and partly Romanised), and traditions, which the Roman authorities could hardly ignore. Some of these communities began to disintegrate under the impact of the developing commodity-money relations. Rich individuals with special rights to their lands (mostly veterans and Roman citizens) became prominent in the communities, while at the other pole there appeared the exploited stratum of indigent community members and aliens. If the disintegration of a rural community went far enough, it received city status; but such communities were still numerous, and their traditions, very tenacious.

The third structure was associated with the enormous estates, often called *saltus*, of the emperors and provincial nobles, both native and newly come from Italy and Rome. They were tilled by colons who rented the land from the owners or by tenants long settled on lands belonging to tribal chieftains or temples. Impoverished peasants as well as slaves and freedmen given the status of colons swelled the numbers of those working on the latifundia. Since the exploitation of communities bound by mutual responsibility was more profitable than that of individual colons, *saltus* owners organised, in addition to the existing communities, new communities of freedmen on the lands they rented out. The staff of a *saltus* usually consisted of the owner's slaves who regularly collected the fixed rent and the landlord's share of the harvest, and sometimes supervised the *corvée* on the lands the estate owners left unleased. They had their markets, temples, and workshops where slaves and free artisans worked. Their population had few ties with the external world, and only the owner, or rather his trusted agents, sold the produce at external markets. The principal antagonistic classes of this socioeconomic structure were landowners and colons, the latter depending in varying degree on the former. The relations between them were not yet those of feudal societies, but elements of feudal relations could develop faster here than on the slave-owning villas of the cities.

In reward for distinguished service, *saltus* owners were permitted to withdraw their estates from the city administration, so that neither they nor their colons had any obligations before the city. In the middle or at the end of the 2nd century a law was passed according to which all the lands of senators, their sons and grandsons were withdrawn from the city territories (the so-called exempt *saltus*), which deprived the cities of their richest taxpayers, sacrifice-makers, and the bulk of buyers in the city markets. All lands belonging to the emperors were also exempt in this sense. The towns, especially little ones, whose territories were often smaller than the territories of the neighbouring *saltus*, were extremely hostile to their owners, their imperial administration, and their big lessees (or *conductores*), who subleased the lands.

All these socioeconomic structures interacted with one another, forming various hybrids (e. g., large estates on city territory cultivated by colons, or



slave-owning farms on village territory), but they became increasingly isolated from and opposed to one another, the slave-owning socioeconomic structure losing its dominant role.

Hadrian was compelled to cancel tax arrears to the tune of 900 million sesterces incurred by provincial cities but the arrears accumulated again. As the slave-owning economy in the provinces developed, it ran into the same problems that had arisen in Italy. The slave-owning mode of production could only partly develop through improving production implements: progress mostly had to be attained through raising the workers' skill and initiative, but the basic contradictions between slaves and masters impeded this mode of development. The same antagonism was the reason why large enterprises capable of the complex cooperation inevitably preceding the invention and integration in production of machines did not emerge. It proved impossible either to lower production costs or to increase labour productivity to any significant extent. Besides, the well-to-do members of communities traditionally had to spend considerable sums for the "public weal", and these expenditures constituted a great part of the surplus product. Even simple reproduction, not to mention reproduction on an extended scale, became less and less feasible.

Despite all the attempts of the Antonines to support the cities and city land-owning through cancellation of arrears, subsidies from the treasury, appointment of special curators supervising city finances, and limiting expenditure on the most expensive spectacles like gladiator fights, the cities, especially the smaller ones, grew impoverished, and city magistracies became an onerous burden rather than honourable and highly coveted offices.

Some lands that brought no profit were abandoned. Hadrian issued a decree offering various privileges to those persons who began to cultivate abandoned lands, but the results were not encouraging. On the other hand, land was increasingly concentrated in the hands of the richest individuals, mostly senators and the emperor himself, and these lands, together with their colon tenants, were no longer under the jurisdiction of the cities. Small land-owners, who paid large taxes and carried the burden of all sorts of exactions, suffered more than the rest of the populace from the pressure and even violence on the part of the provincial officials and

soldiers. Petitions have survived in which peasants from Thrace, Africa and Asia Minor appealed to the emperor to punish abuses, threatening to abandon their lands and flee if their demands were not met. Peasants were again losing their independence as they became insolvent debtors and colons tilling the lands of landlords from whom they could not escape until they paid off all their debts.

The ruin of the peasants, who were the backbone of the army, led to a fall in the numbers of Roman citizens – and only Roman citizens could serve in the legions. Hadrian had to give up some of Trajan's conquests in the East, and he also began to recruit peregrines from the provinces for the legions, granting them Roman citizenship. Giving up the offensive strategy, the emperor went on the defensive and began to construct powerful fortifications, the so-called Hadrian's Wall, along the empire's boundaries.

Despite the glorification of the Antonines who, in the words of Tacitus, succeeded in combining absolute rule with freedom, certain alarming tendencies were becoming apparent in the mood of various social strata. The desire, conscious or unconscious, to go beyond the strictly regulated aimless routine gave rise to a morbid interest in all things extraordinary, mystical and unreal. Works reflecting actual life were superseded by popular tales of miracles, ghosts, vampires, daemons, spirits, statues coming to life, exotic peoples and animals, tales that flooded even works purporting to be scholarly. With the exception of Alexandria and Pergamum, science declined, increasingly becoming speculative and based on a chain of logical constructs and assumptions, often arbitrary, rather than on observation. Losing its former ties with science, philosophy moved closer to religion. On the other hand, practical application of the achievements of science was impeded by the growing contempt among the upper classes for any sort of mundane activity. Seneca wrote that those who believed that the wise men of antiquity had taught men various useful things, and invented those things, were wrong. If they had done so, they had not acted as befitted wise men, for invention was an occupation suitable for contemptible slaves, not philosophers. Science and life increasingly diverged. The physician Sextus Empiricus protested against this kind of speculative and dogmatic scholarship, insisting that science could only be based on experi-



Dish with a picture of a hunter with four dogs. Clay. 4th millennium B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

King Narmer's palette. End of the 4th millennium B.C. Egyptian Museum, Cairo

Knife made of a thin strip of flint. Flint, ivory. Late 4th-early 3rd millennium B.C.







The sphinx and the pyramid of Khefren (Kha-f-Ra) at Gizeh, Egypt. 27th century B.C.

A night view of the Sphinx and pharaohs' tombs at Gizeh

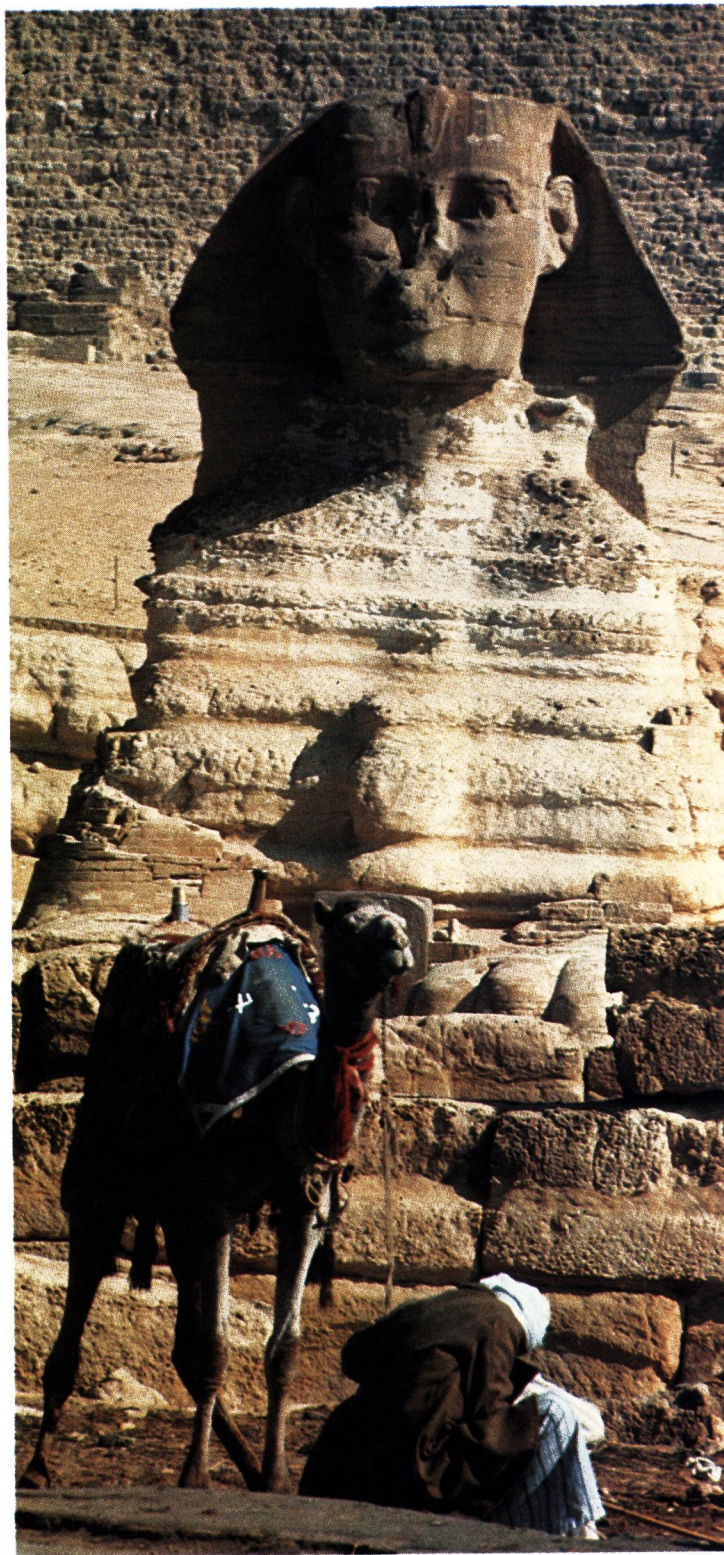
The great pyramids. Gizeh. 27th century B.C.

Scarab. 16th-17th centuries B.C.

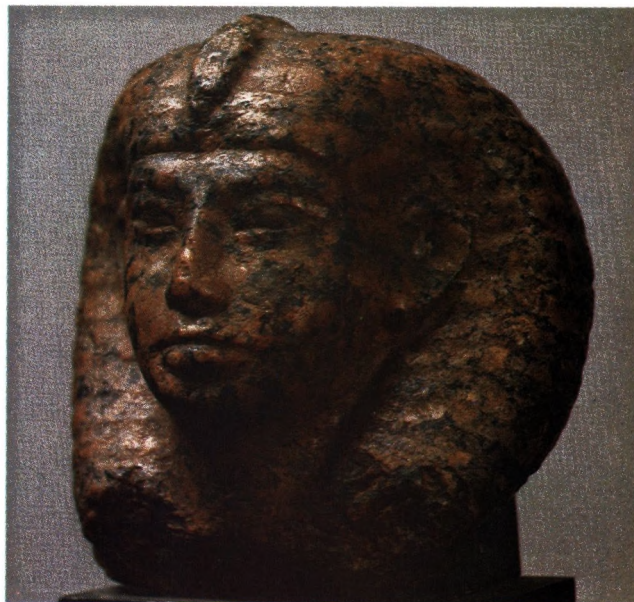
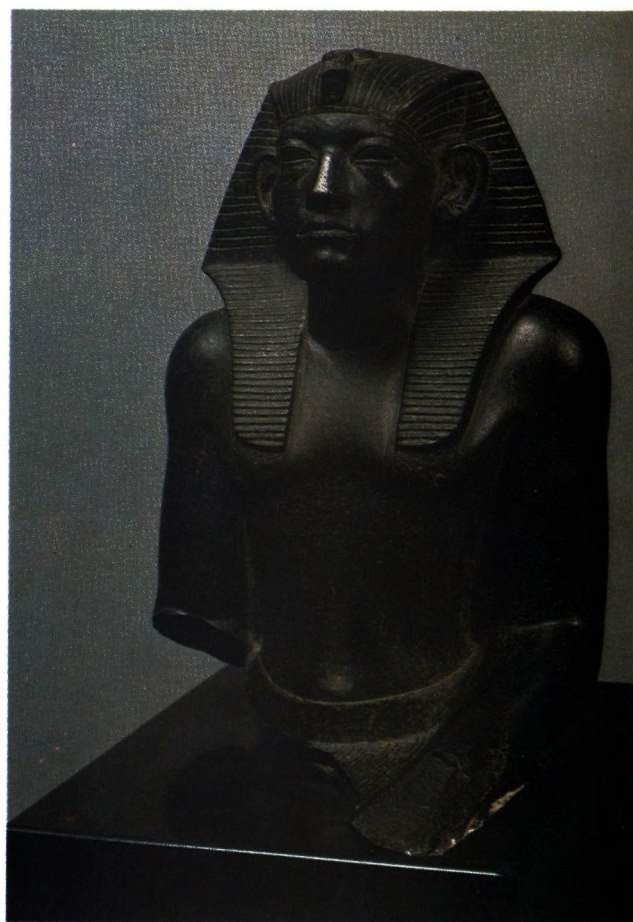
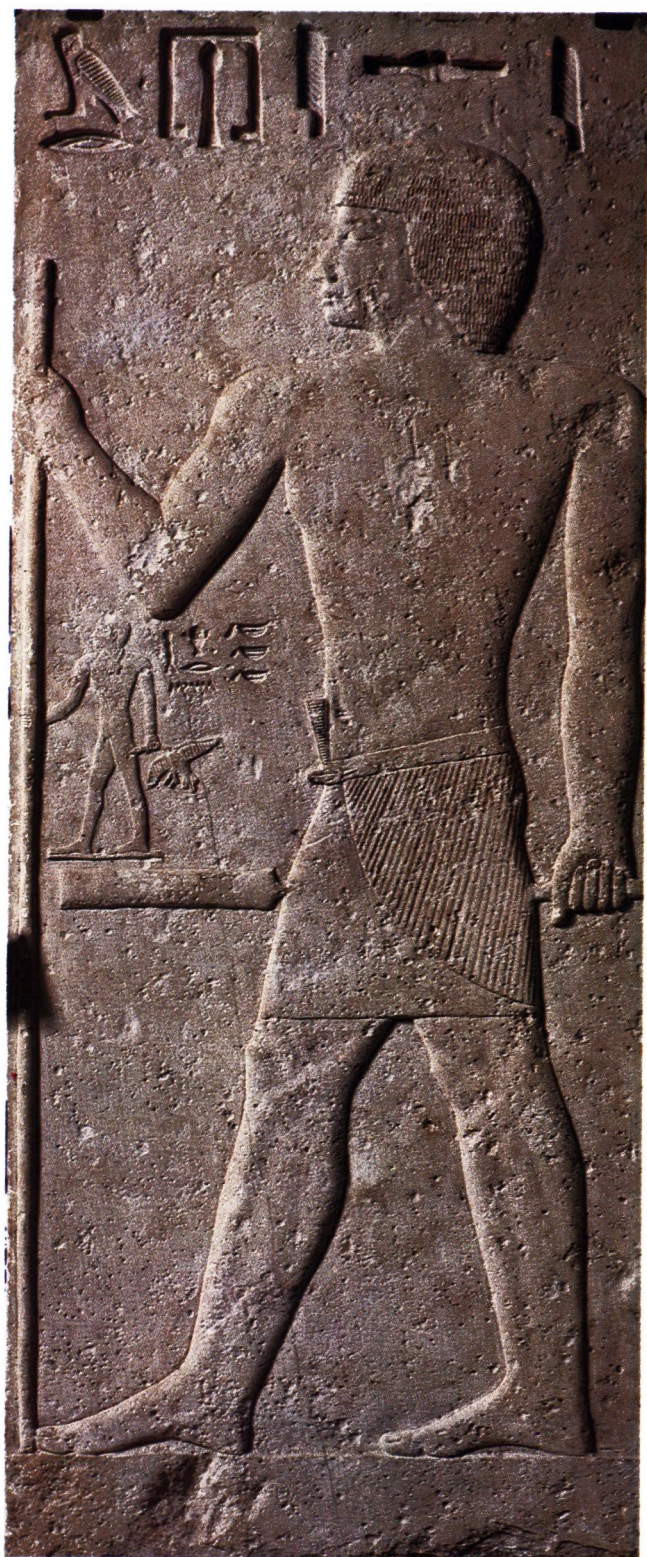
A sphinx of the Old Kingdom at Gizeh. 27th century B.C.









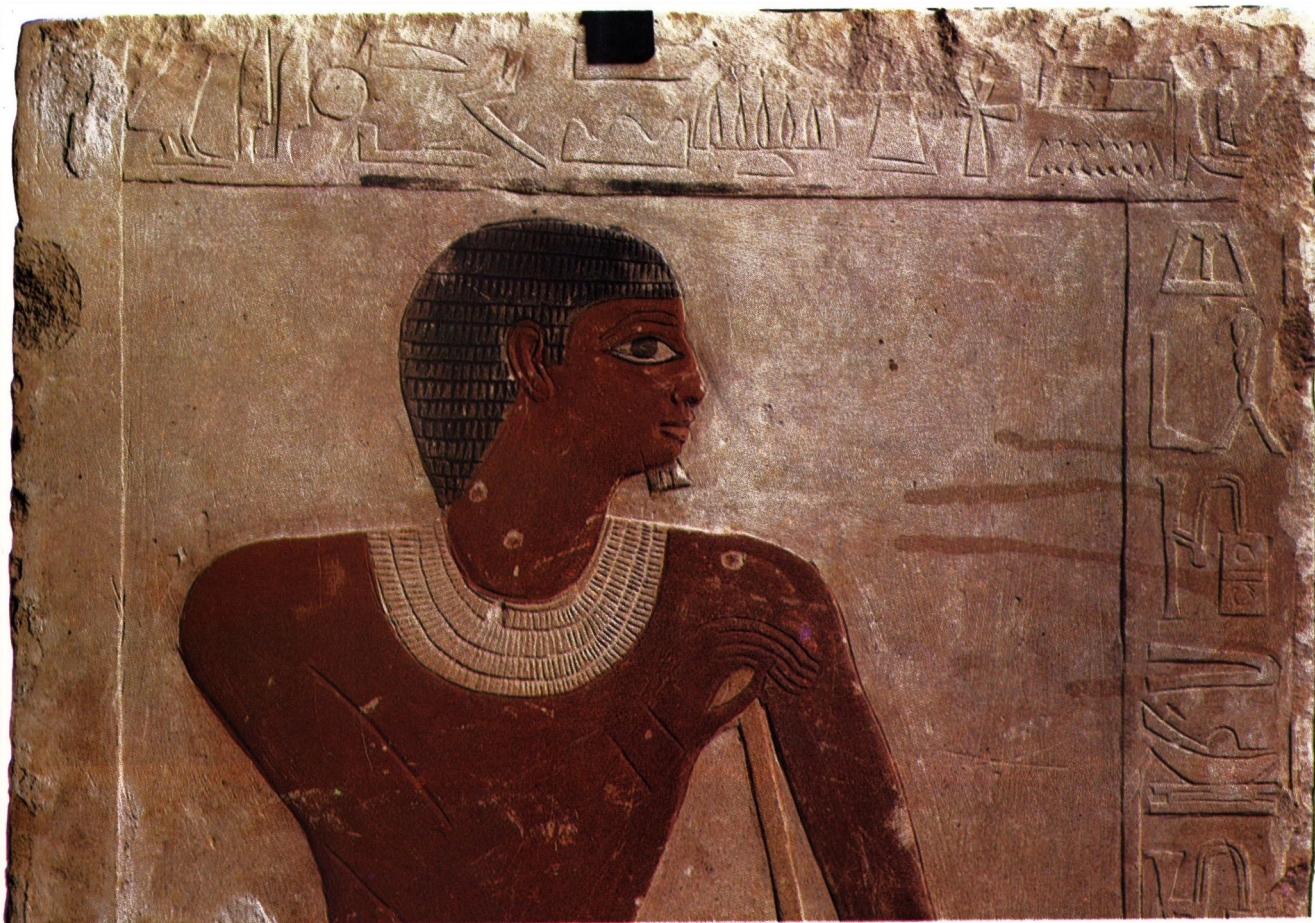


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Relief from the tomb of treasurer Isi. Limestone. Mid-3rd millennium B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts

Relief from a scribe's tomb. Limestone. Mid-3rd millennium B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Statue of Pharaoh Amenemhet III. Basalt. 18th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Figurine of a scribe. Basalt. 18th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

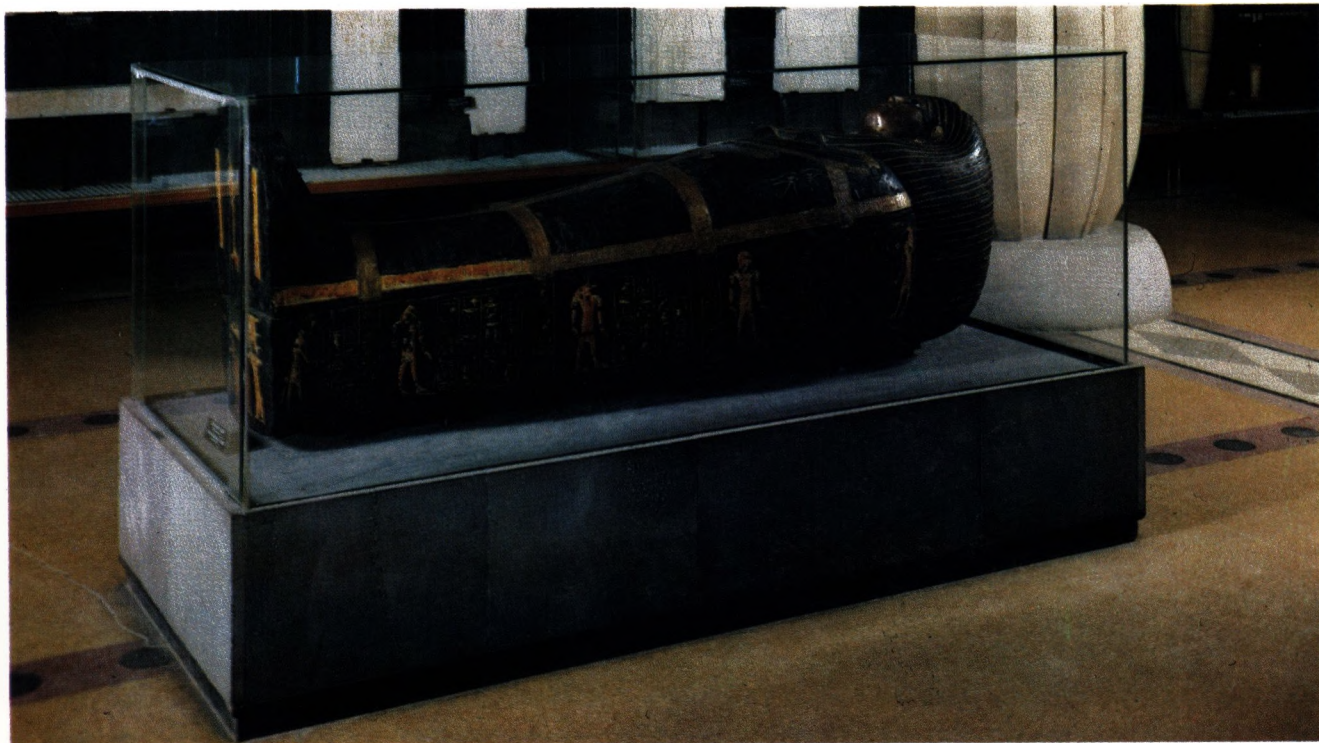
Head of a queen's statue. Granite. 18th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow











Model of a boat. Wood, paint. 18th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Boat. Wood. 18th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Sarcophagus of a farmer. Wood, paint. 15th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Scarab with a hieroglyphic text reporting the killing of 102 lions by Pharaoh Amenhotep III. Steatite. 15th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow







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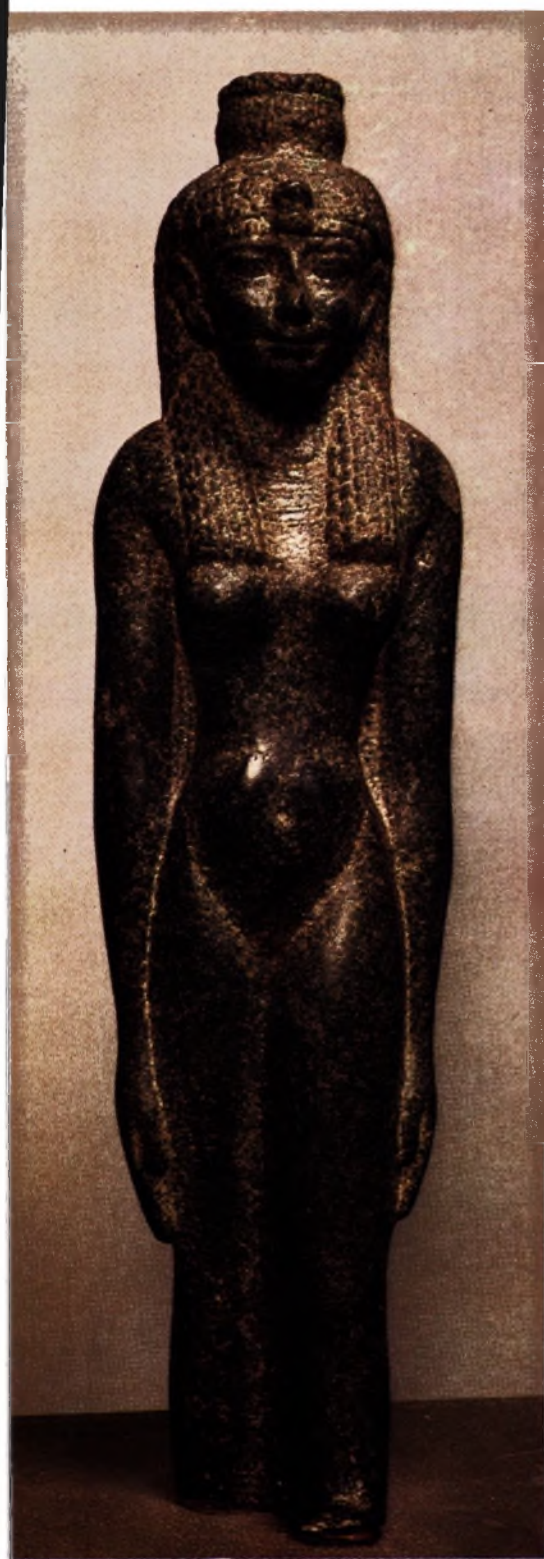
*The Book of the Dead.* Papyrus, paint. 13th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Relief from a Memphis tomb. Limestone. 13th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Relief with heads of Hittites. Sandstone. 13th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow











Statue of an Ethiopian queen. Basalt. 4th century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

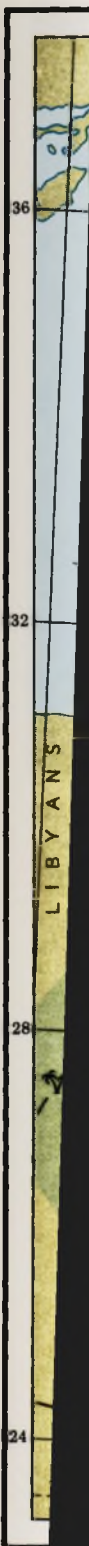
Portrait of a man. From the Fayum oasis. Wood, paint. 2nd century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Portrait of a woman. From the Fayum oasis. Wood, paint. 2nd century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

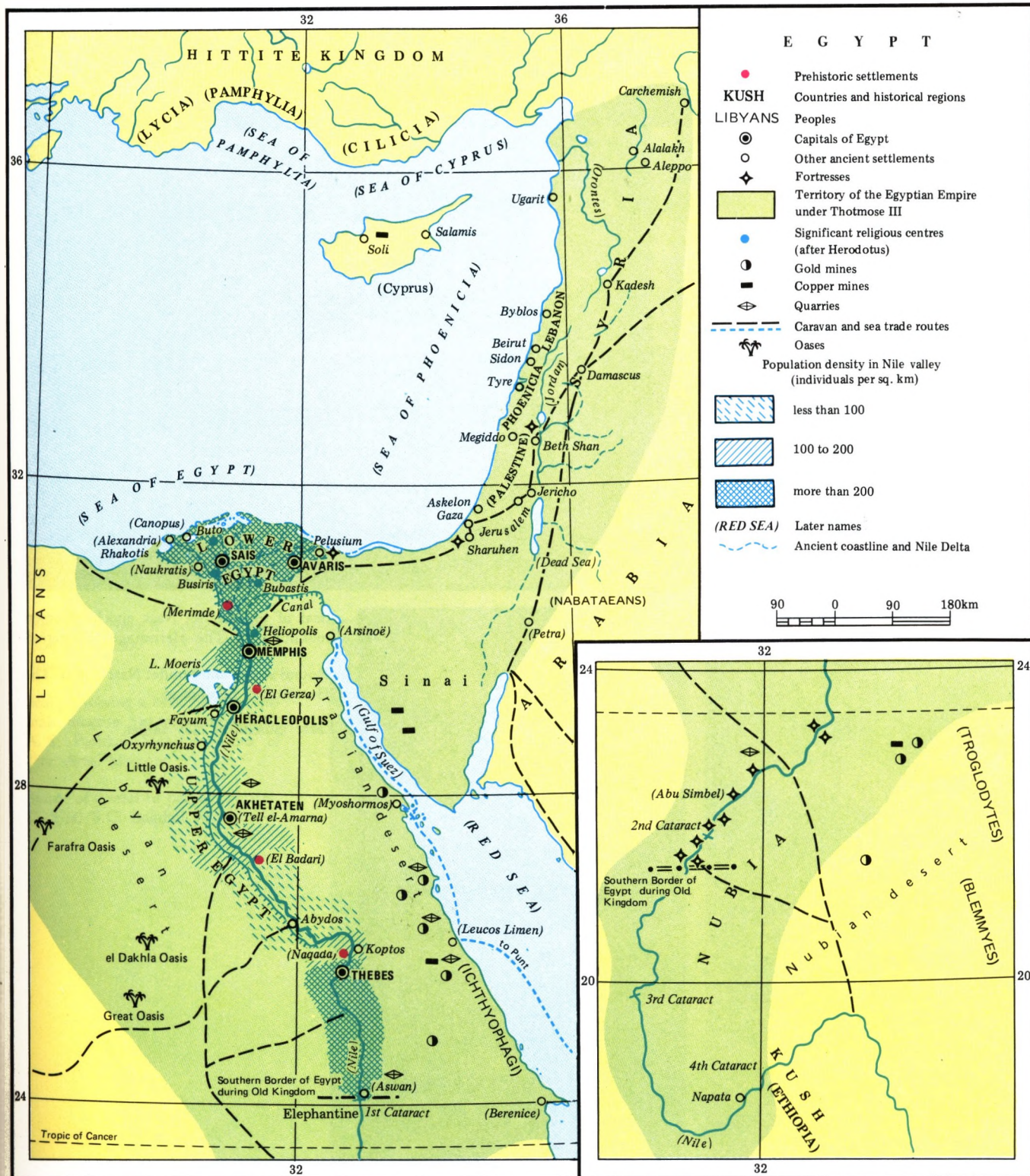
Sculptured model of a bust. Limestone. 3rd century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

Portrait of a man from the Fayum oasis. Wood, paint. 2nd century B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

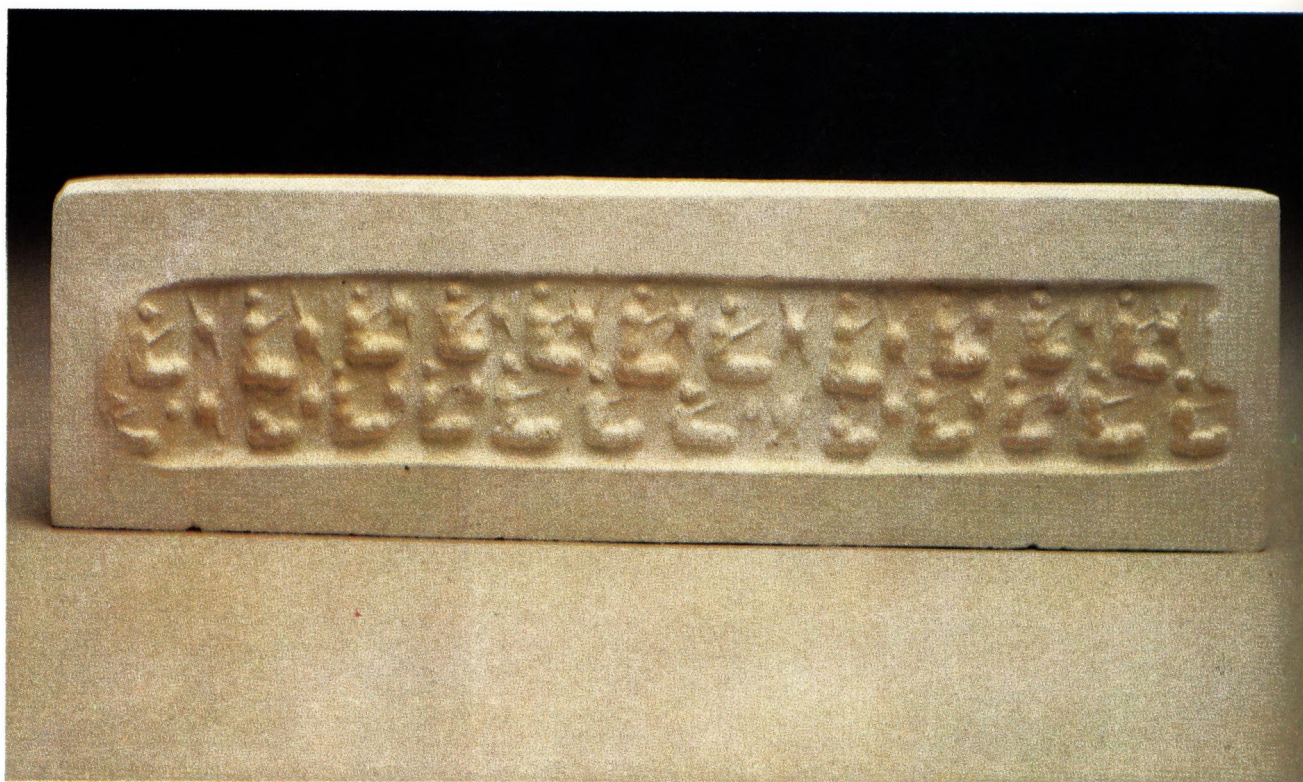












Seal of the Jemdet Nasr epoch. Women making pots. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Round seal of the Jemdet Nasr epoch. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Early cuneiform clay tablet.

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Statue of a ruler in prayer. Limestone. C. 3300 B.C. Bagdad Museum

Seal portraying a hero fighting animals. Steatite. 3rd millennium B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

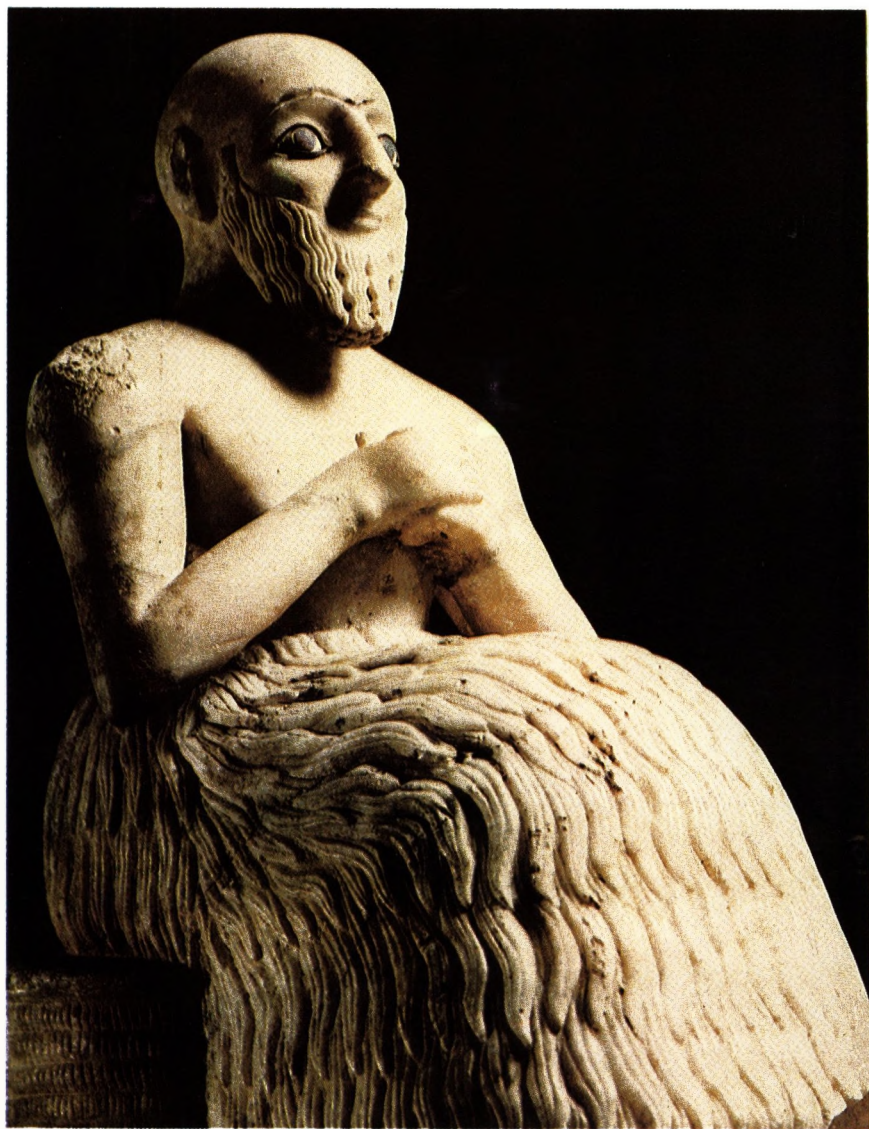
Statue of a man in prayer. Plaster. C. 2700 B.C. Bagdad Museum











Statue of a goddess with a vessel from the palace of Zimri-Lim (Mari). Limestone. Early 18th century B.C. Museum, Aleppo

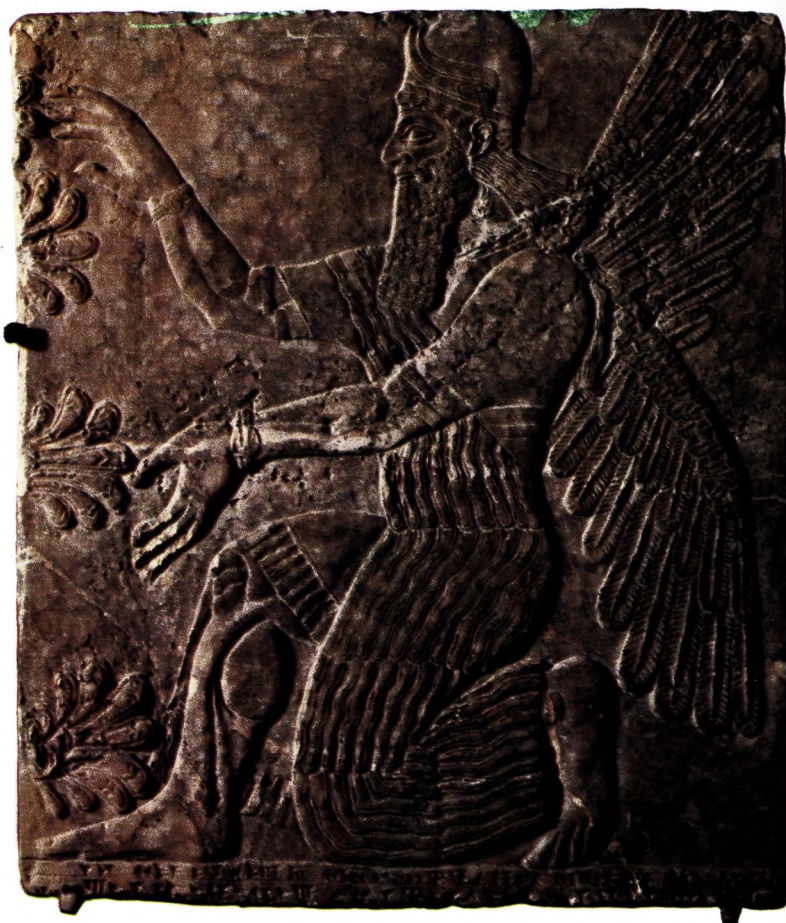
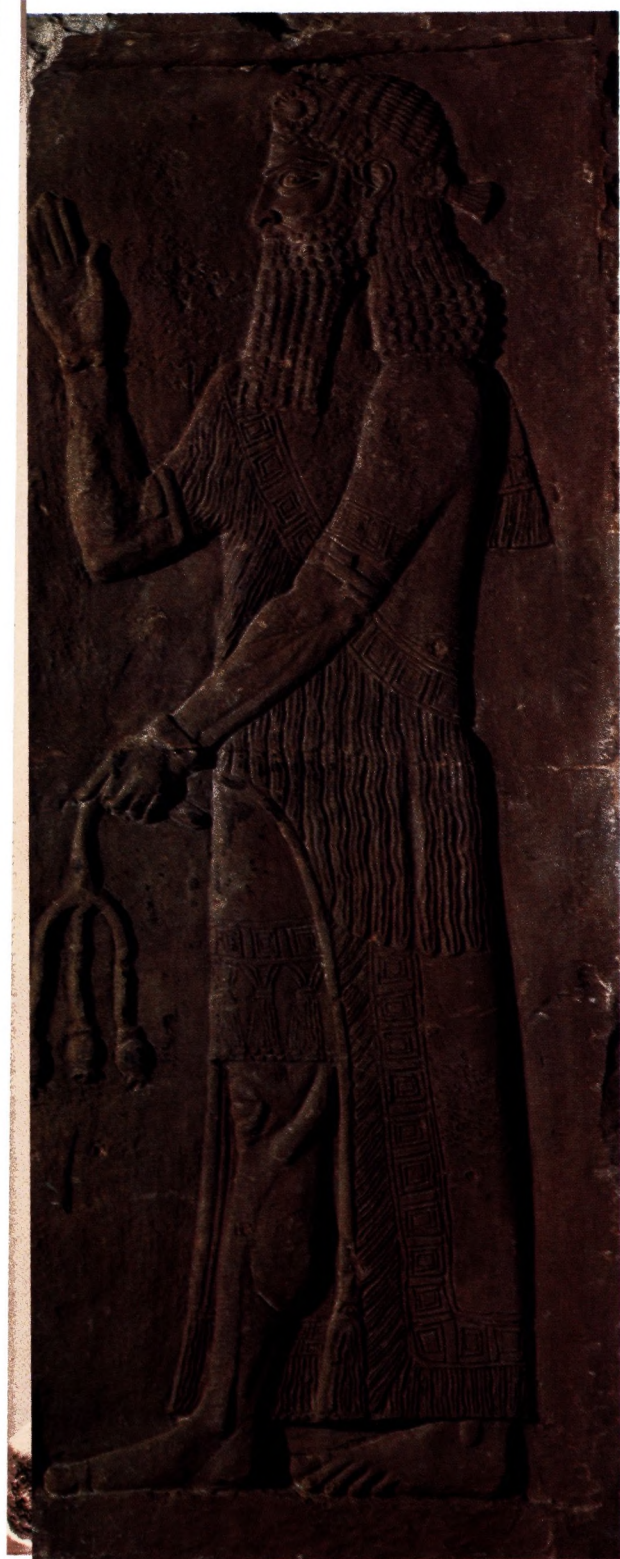
The Naramsin stele. Limestone. C. 2250 B.C. Louvre, Paris

Ebih-il, an official from Mari. Alabaster. C. 2400 B.C. Louvre, Paris

Statue of King Ashurnasirpal II. Alabaster. 9th century B.C. British Museum, London







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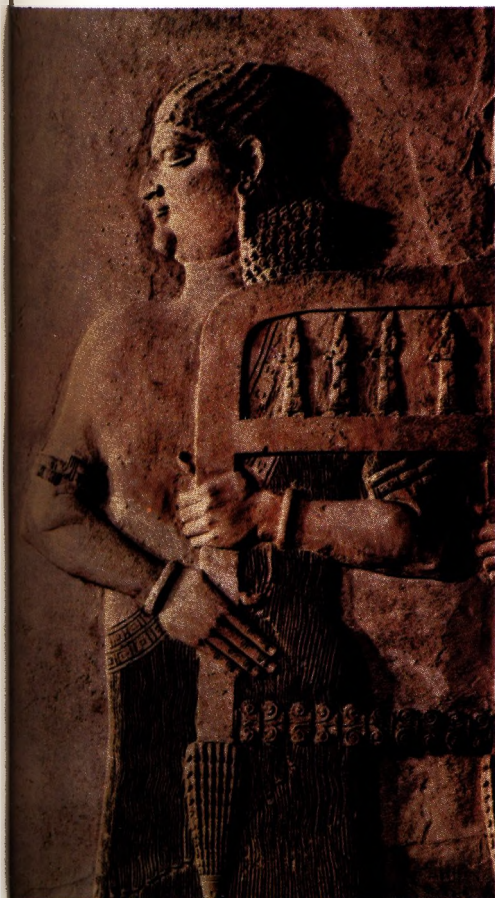
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Assyrian reliefs. Priest with a pomegranate branch. Alabaster. 9th century B.C.

Assyrian reliefs. "A Priest on His Knees". Alabaster. 9th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

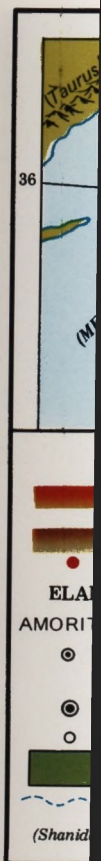
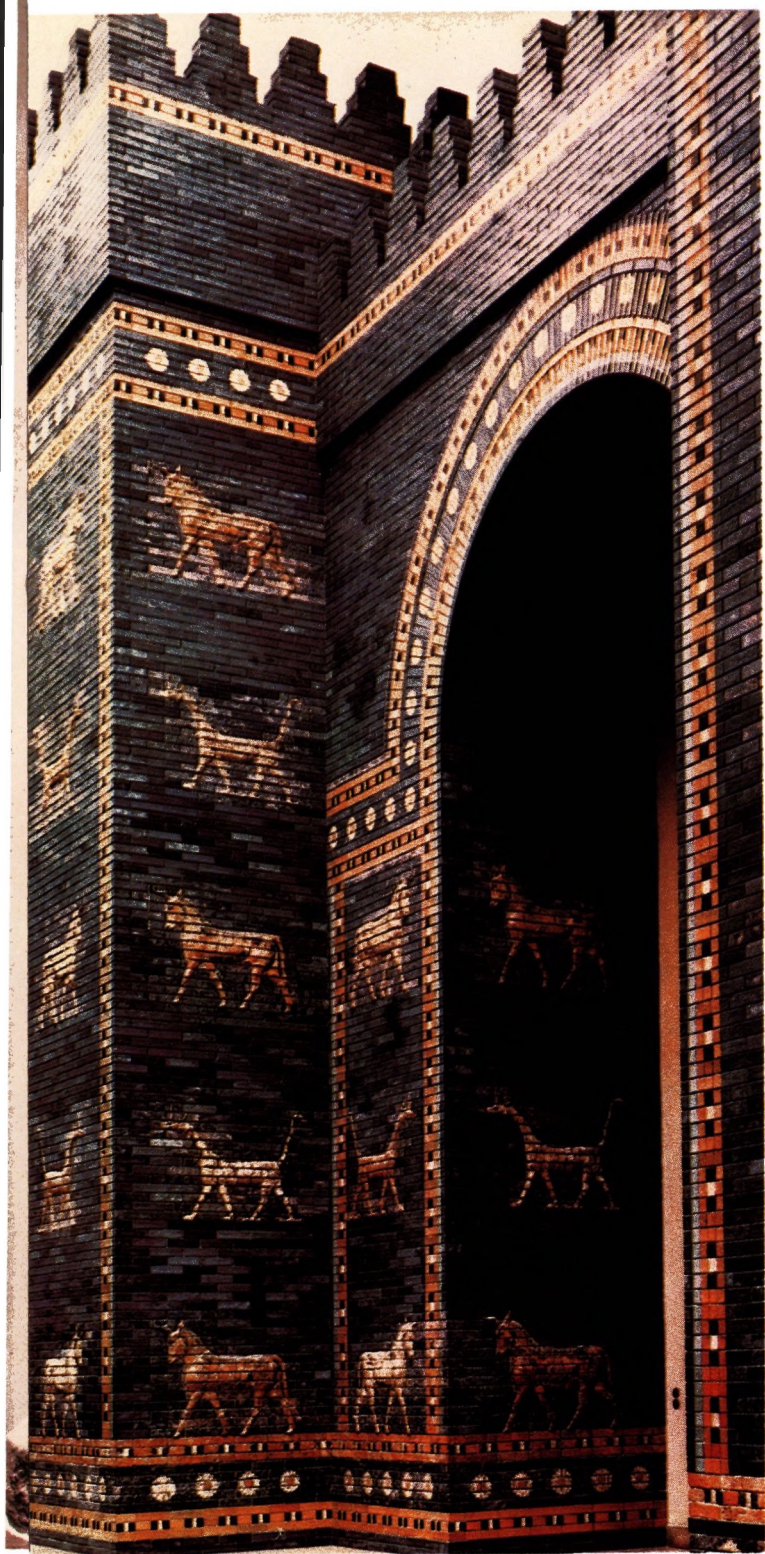
Head of Gudea, ruler of Lagash. C. 2150 B.C. Louvre, Paris

Man carrying a throne. Dur-Sharrukin. Plaster. End of the 8th century B.C. Baghdad Museum

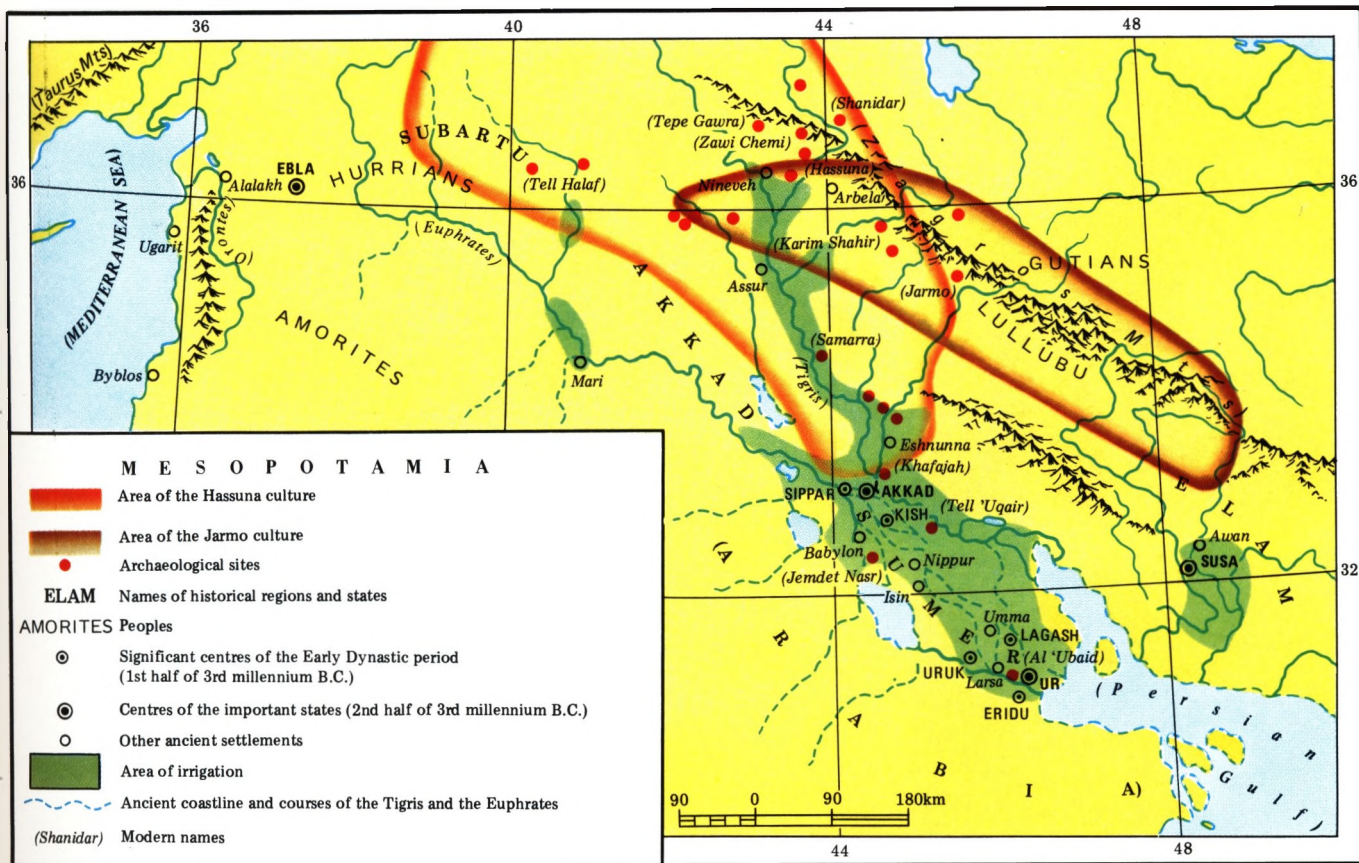
Assyrian reliefs. "Genius". The Hermitage, Leningrad











Reconstruction of the Ishtar Gate. Babylon. Glazed brick. Early 6th century B.C. Berlin Museum

Offerer with a kid. Sargon II's palace at Dur-Sharrukin. Painted plaster. End of the 8th century B.C. Louvre, Paris

Assyrian reliefs. Archers

Cuneiform tablets. Clay. 2nd millennium B.C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow





Portrayal of a goddess in childbirth. Çatal Hüyük, level II. Terracotta. 6th millennium B.C. Hittite Museum, Ankara

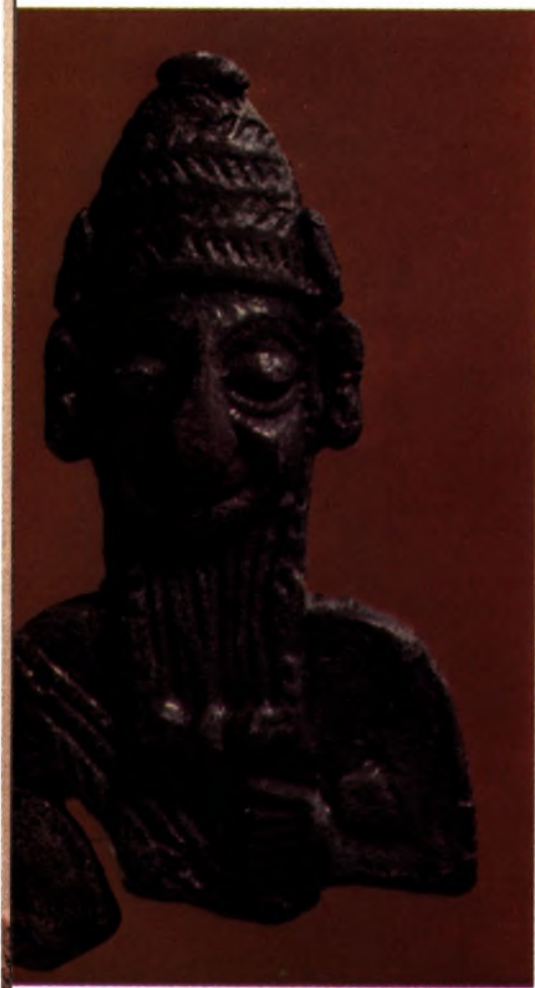
Vase in the shape of a lion. Kanish (Anatolia). 20th-19th centuries B.C. Louvre, Paris

Hittites. The "Daemon's Head" lead amulet. The Hermitage, Leningrad

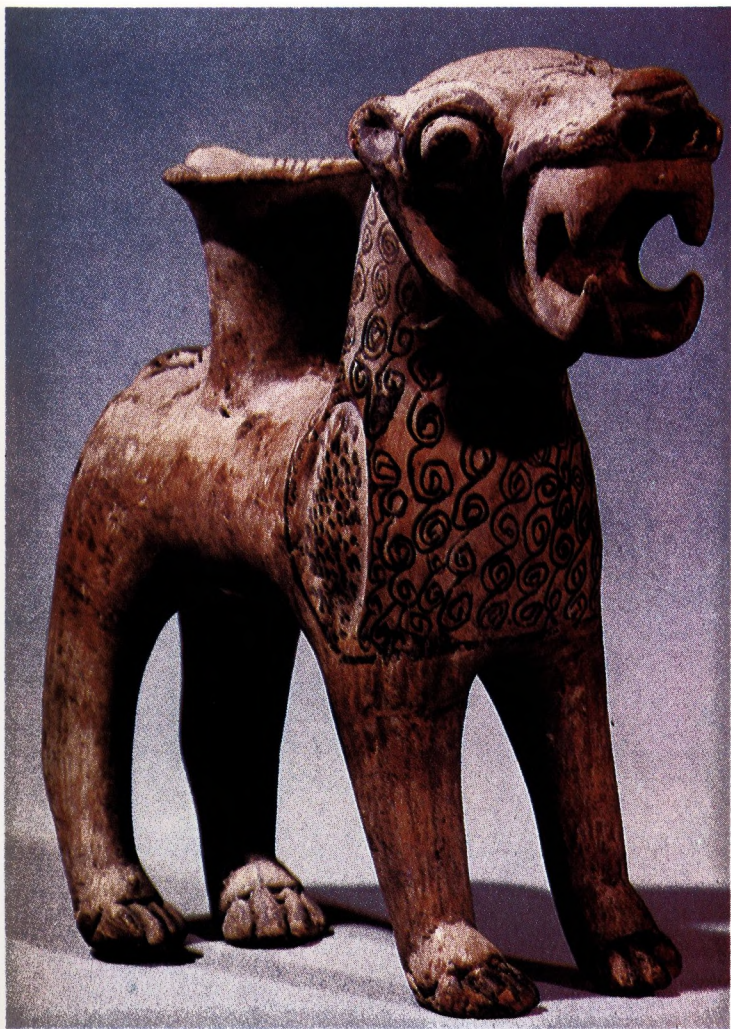
Hittites. A seal.

"Standard" mount from a royal tomb at Alaca Hüyük (Anatolia). Bronze and silver. C. 2300 B.C. Ankara Museum

Hittite god of the storm. Basalt. 9th century B.C. Istanbul Museum















Statuette of a goddess giving benediction (Ugarit). Bronze. Mid-3rd millennium B.C. Damascus Museum

Vessels, dagger, plaque (Phoenicia). Gold, silver, lapis lazuli. 19th-18th centuries B.C. National Museum, Beirut

Vessel in the form of a human head (Palestine). Terracotta. 17th-16th centuries B.C. Jerusalem Museum

Woman's head in tall headgear (Ugarit). Ivory, gold. 14th century B.C. National Museum, Damascus

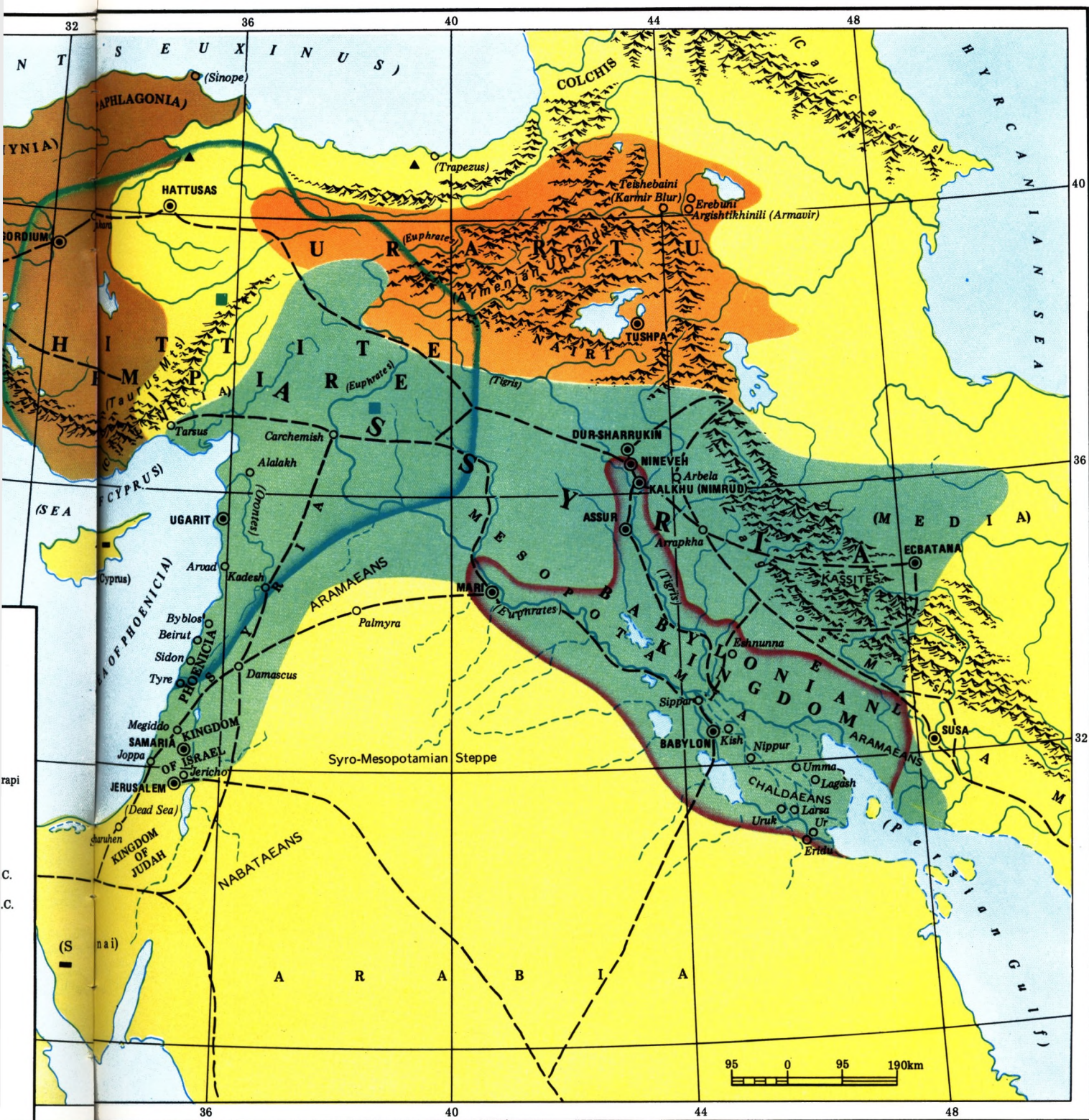




Figurines on a votive chariot (Ugarit).  
13th century B.C. Louvre, Paris



















Horse's head. Mount on a chariot pole. Bronze. 8th century B.C. Museum of the History of Armenia, Yerevan



Dish with a cuneiform inscription from Teishebanini. Bronze. 8th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Ornament on a cauldron. Bronze. 8th century. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Fragment of a wall painting with figures of bulls and ornament. 8th century B.C. Museum of the History of Armenia, Yerevan



Erebuni. Armenian SSR

Erebuni. Reconstruction of the hall









Winged lion with a human head. Throne ornament. Bronze. 8th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Gold necklace with turtle-shaped pendants. From excavations at Vani. (Georgian SSR). 5th century B.C.

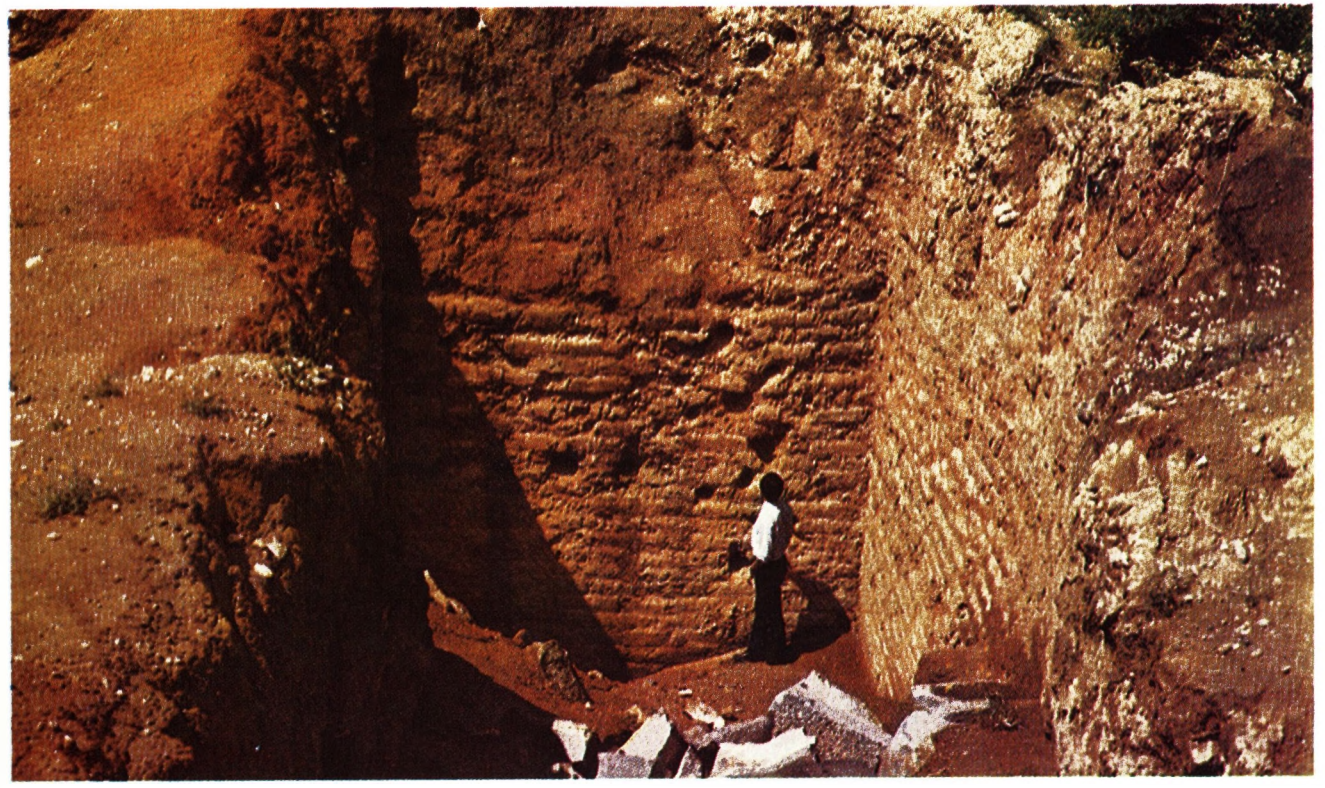
Gold temple ornaments. From excavations at Vani (Georgian SSR). 5th century B.C.

Urartu. Teishebaini. View of the excavations. 7th century B.C.





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Urartean vessels from Erebuni and Teishebaini. 8th-7th centuries B. C. A. S. Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow



Ariadne. Terracotta. 2nd-1st centuries B. C. (Georgian SSR)

Temple at Garni. The Hellenistic epoch



















Sculptured felt figurines of swans from the 5th Pazyryk kurgan (High Altai). 5th-4th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Heads of rams (saddle ornaments). From the 2nd Bashadar kurgan (High Altai). Wood, gold foil. 5th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Panther. Gold plaque on a shield from the Kelermes kurgan (Kuban Region). 7th-6th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Deer. Gold shield plaque from a kurgan near Kostromskaya village (Kuban Region). 7th-6th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Gold comb from the Solokha kurgan (North Black Sea coast). 4th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad







Felt carpet (detail) from the 5th Pazyryk kurgan (High Altai). 5th-4th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Felt carpet (detail) from the 5th Pazyryk kurgan (High Altai). 5th-4th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad







Felt saddle cover from the 1st Pazyryk kurgan (High Altai). 5th-4th centuries B.C.  
The Hermitage, Leningrad



Figurines of eagles (saddle ornament).  
From the 2nd Bashadar kurgan (High Altai). Wood, gold foil. 5th century B.C.



Bridle ornament: browband in the shape of an eagle. Wood. 6th century B.C. The 1st kurgan near Thekta, Altai



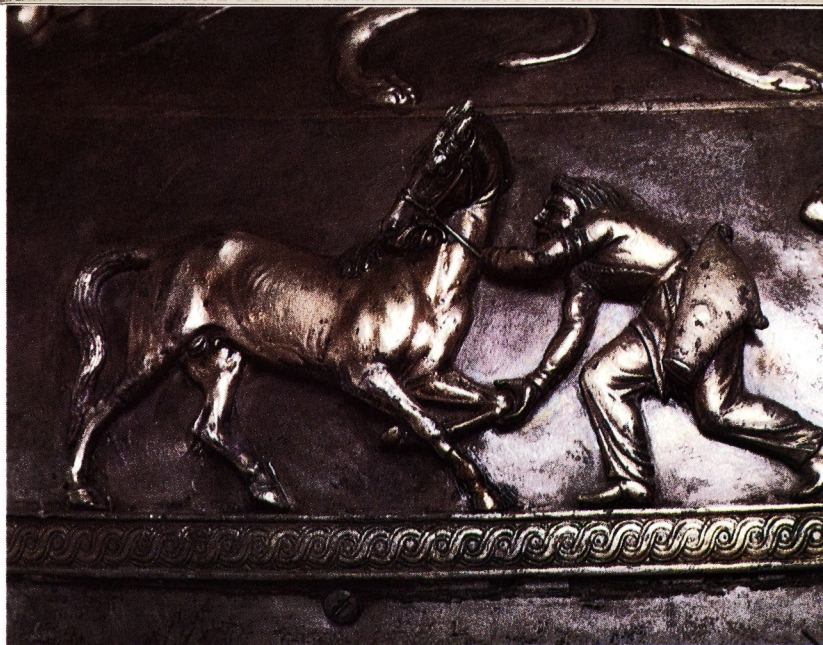






Pile carpet from the 5th Pazyryk kurgan (High Altai). 5th-4th centuries B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Silver amphora from the Chertomlyk kurgan (North Black Sea coast). 4th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad







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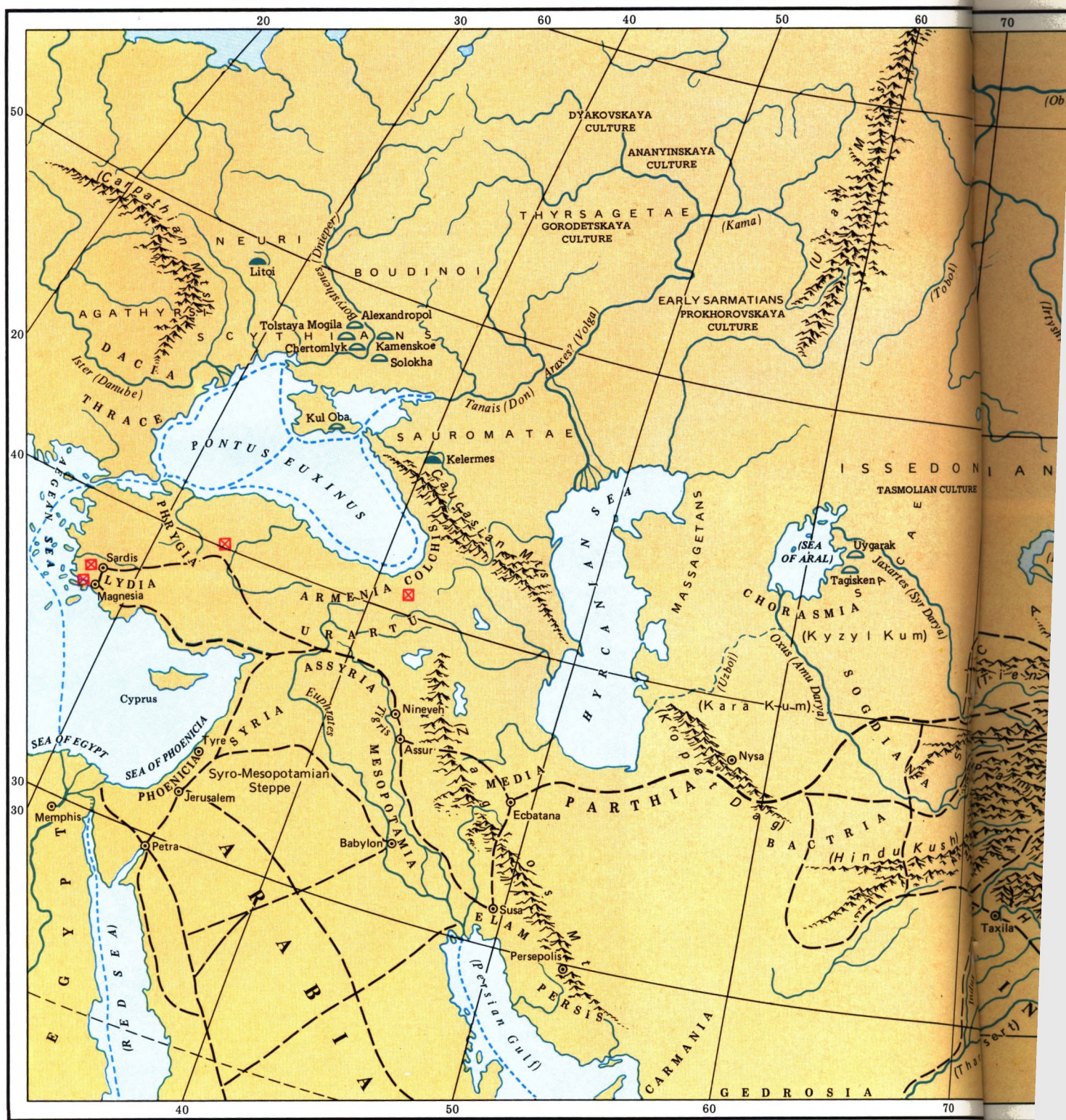
Silver vessel with a mythological scene from a kurgan near Voronezh. 4th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Gold cover of a bowcase from the Cher-  
tomlyk kurgan (North Black Sea coast).  
4th century B.C. The Hermitage, Lenin-  
grad

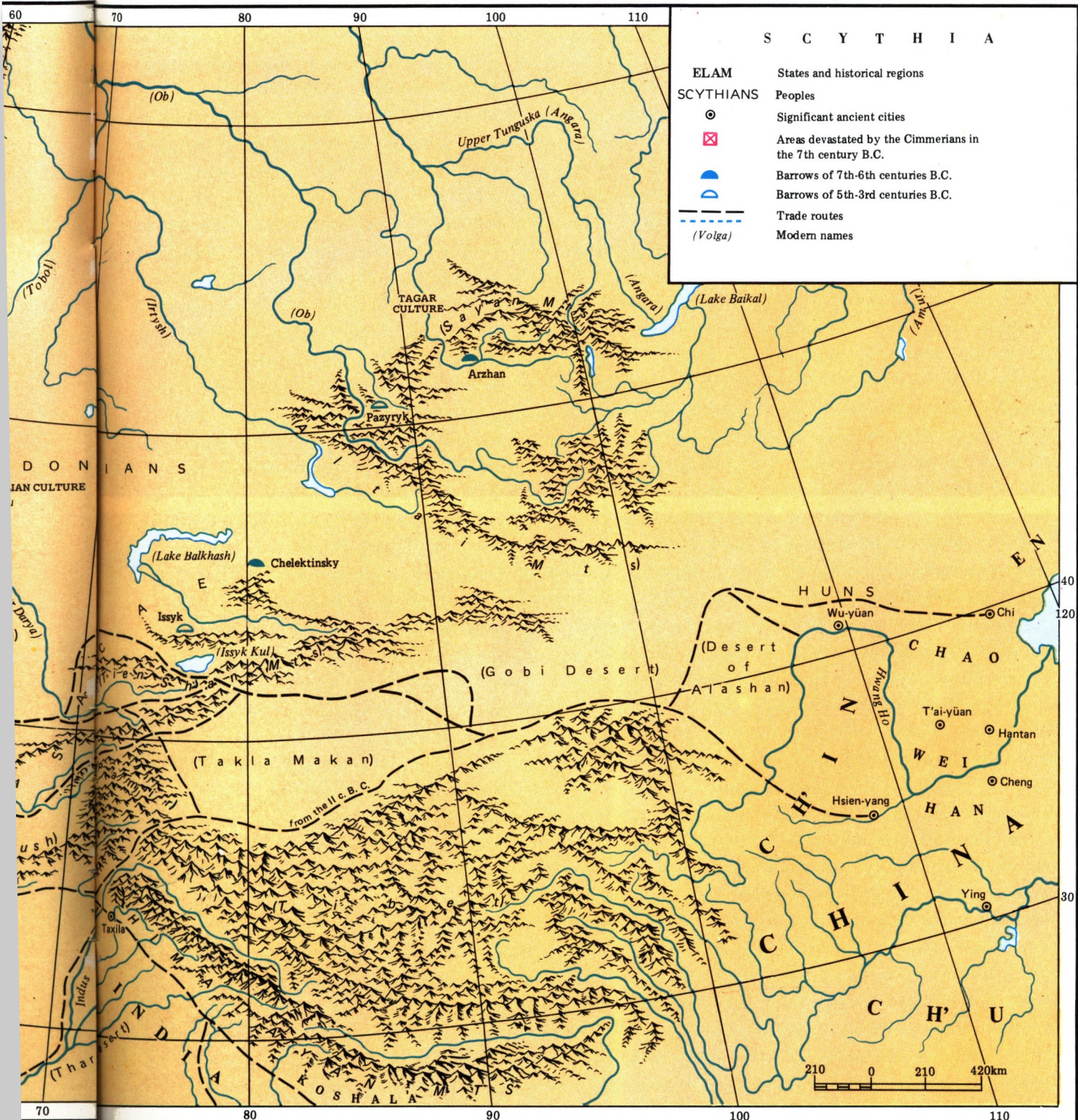
Gold pectoral from the Tolstaya Mogila  
kurgan (North Black Sea coast). 4th cen-  
tury B.C. Museum of Historical Treasures,  
Kiev















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Elamite's head. Clay. 2nd millennium B.C.  
Louvre, Paris

Façade of the *apadana*. Persepolis. 5th century B.C.

Head of a Bactrian. Eastern staircase of the *apadana*. Persepolis. 5th century B.C.

Mede with a dagger. Eastern staircase of the *apadana*. Persepolis. 5th century B.C.

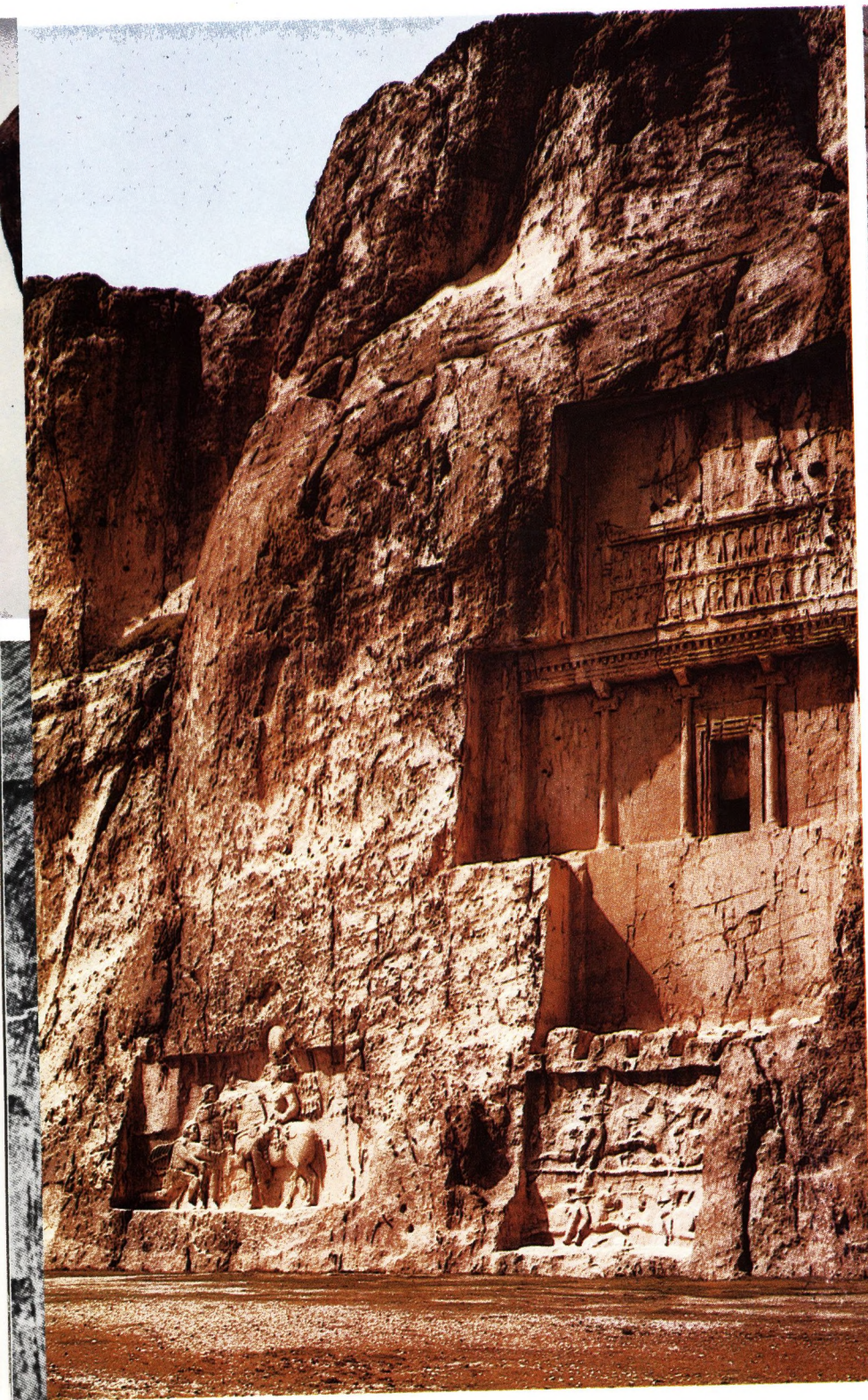
Figurine of a doe. Gold. 6th century B.C.  
The Hermitage, Leningrad

"Gate of All Peoples". Built under Darius I and his son Xerxes. 5th century B.C.

Gold sword hilt. Ecbatana (Hamadan). Achaemenid epoch, 5th century B.C. Tehran Museum











Darius I's tomb (522-484 B.C.) *Bottom left:* Shapur I's victory relief (241-272 B.C.) and the later Naksh-i-Rustam double relief

Warrior's head. Persepolis. 4th century B.C.

Frieze with Darius's archers from Susa. Glazed brick. 5th century B.C. Louvre, Paris





Necklace with a lioness's heads (detail). Gold, bronze. 6th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad



Medallion portrait of the Parthian King of Kings. Silver. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Dish portraying a sacred bird taking a goddess to heaven. Silver. 8th century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Figurine of a galloping horseman. Gold. The Hermitage, Leningrad

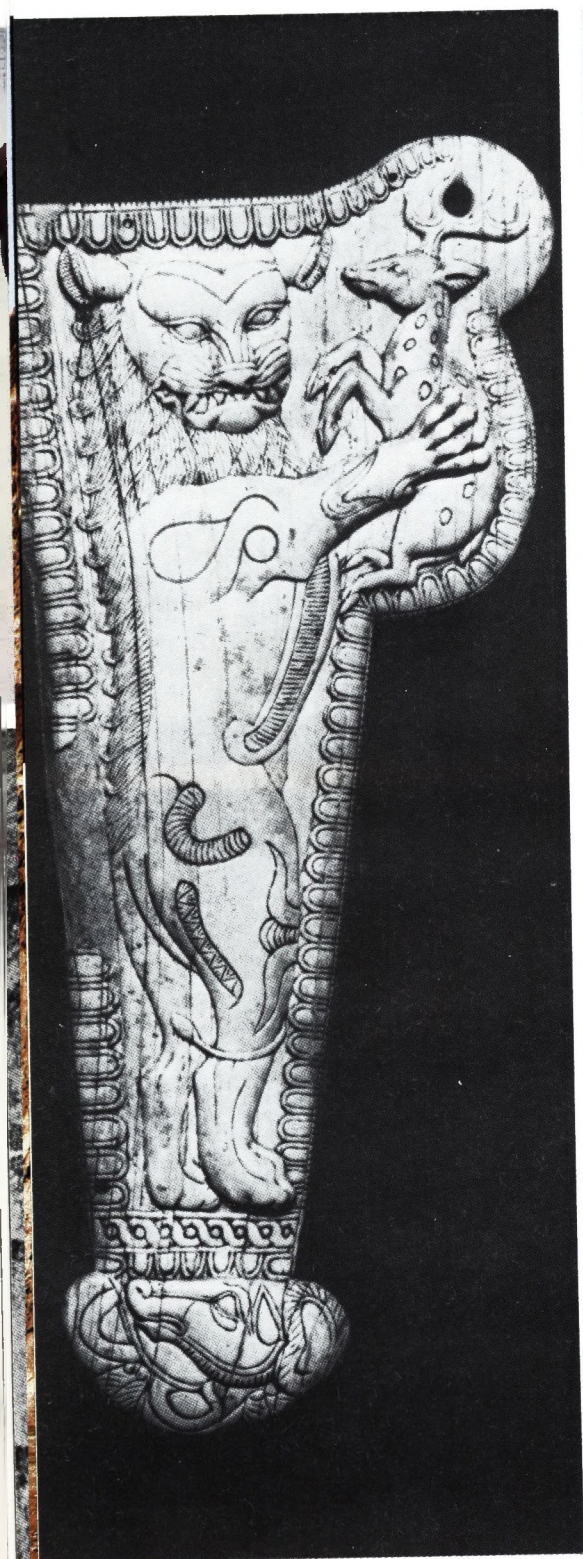
Figurine of an eagle tearing a swan to pieces. Gold, enamel. The Hermitage, Leningrad











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*Akinakēs* scabbard. Ivory, relief, engraving. From Takhti-Sangin (South Tajikistan). 5th century B.C.

Gold head of a bull from Altin-depe (Turkmenian SSR). The bronze epoch

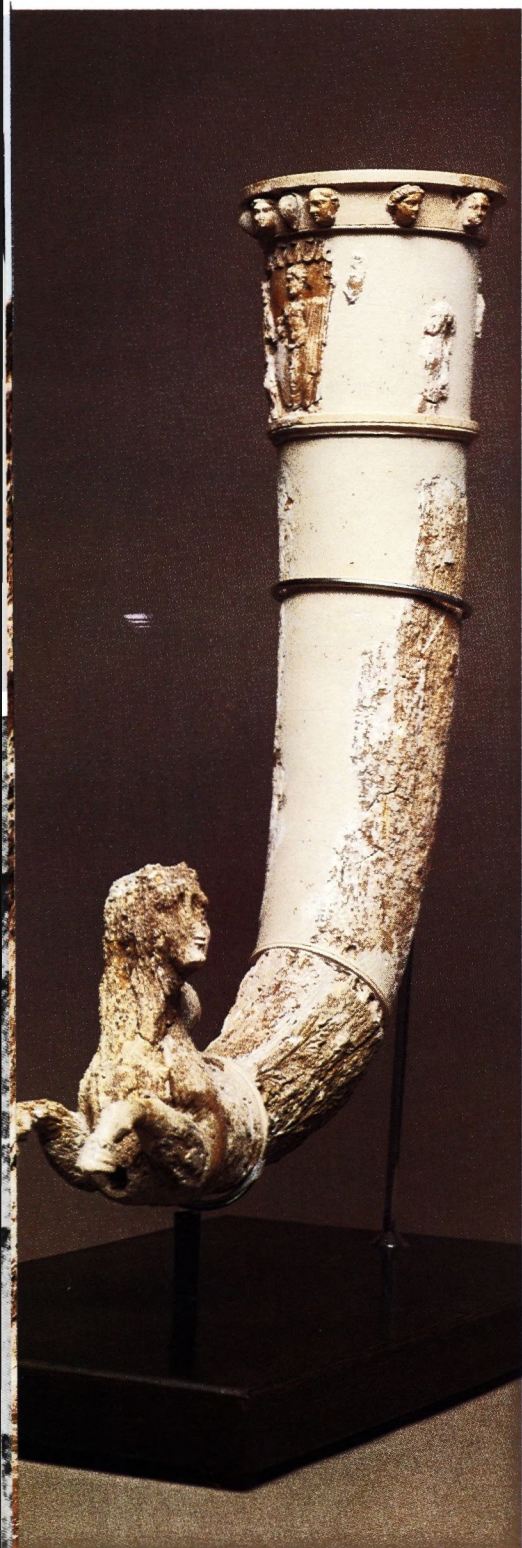
Head of a Hellenistic ruler. Painted Alabaster, polychrome. From Takhti-Sangin. Institute of History of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe

Votive altar with sculpture of Silenus. From Takhti-Sangin. (The altar is made of limestone, the figurine is bronze). 2nd century B.C. Institute of History of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe

*Machaira* hilt portraying the struggle between Heracles and Silenus from Takhti-Sangin. 4th-3rd centuries B.C. Ivory, relief, engraving. Institute of History of the Tajik Academy of Sciences, Dushanbe







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Rhyton from Nisa. Carved ivory. 2nd century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Golden belt from a warrior's tomb at Tillya-tepe (modern Afghanistan). The plaques portray the goddess Cybele riding a lion. Late 1st century B.C.-early 1st century A.D. National Museum, Kabul

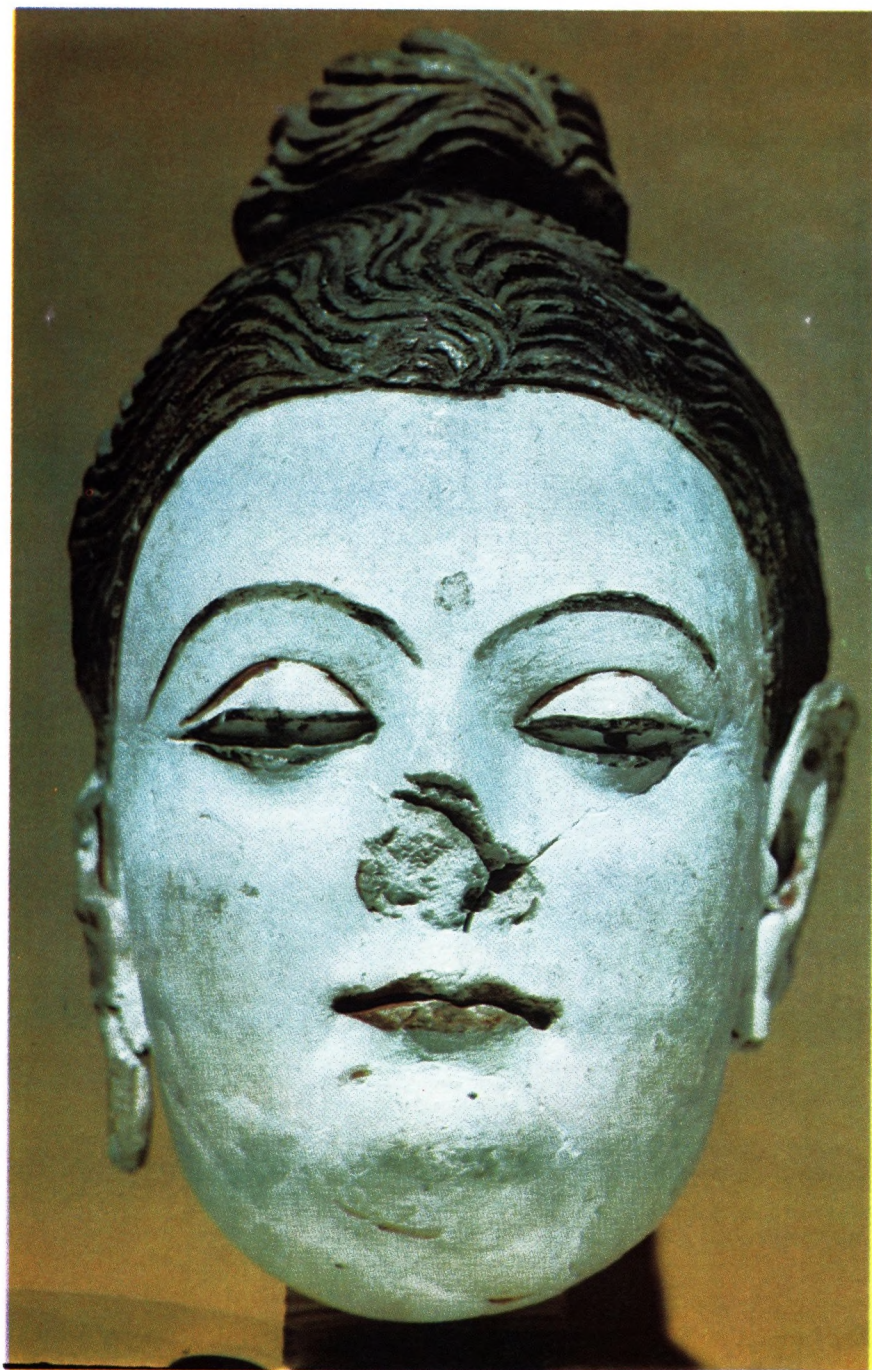
Two gold figurines of winged goddesses from Tillya-tepe. Late 1st century B.C.-early 1st A.D. National Museum, Kabul



Head of an old man (fragment of a vessel). From Zar-tepe. Ceramics. 1st-4th centuries A.D.

Head of a prince from Dalverzin-tepe. 1st-2nd centuries A.D.



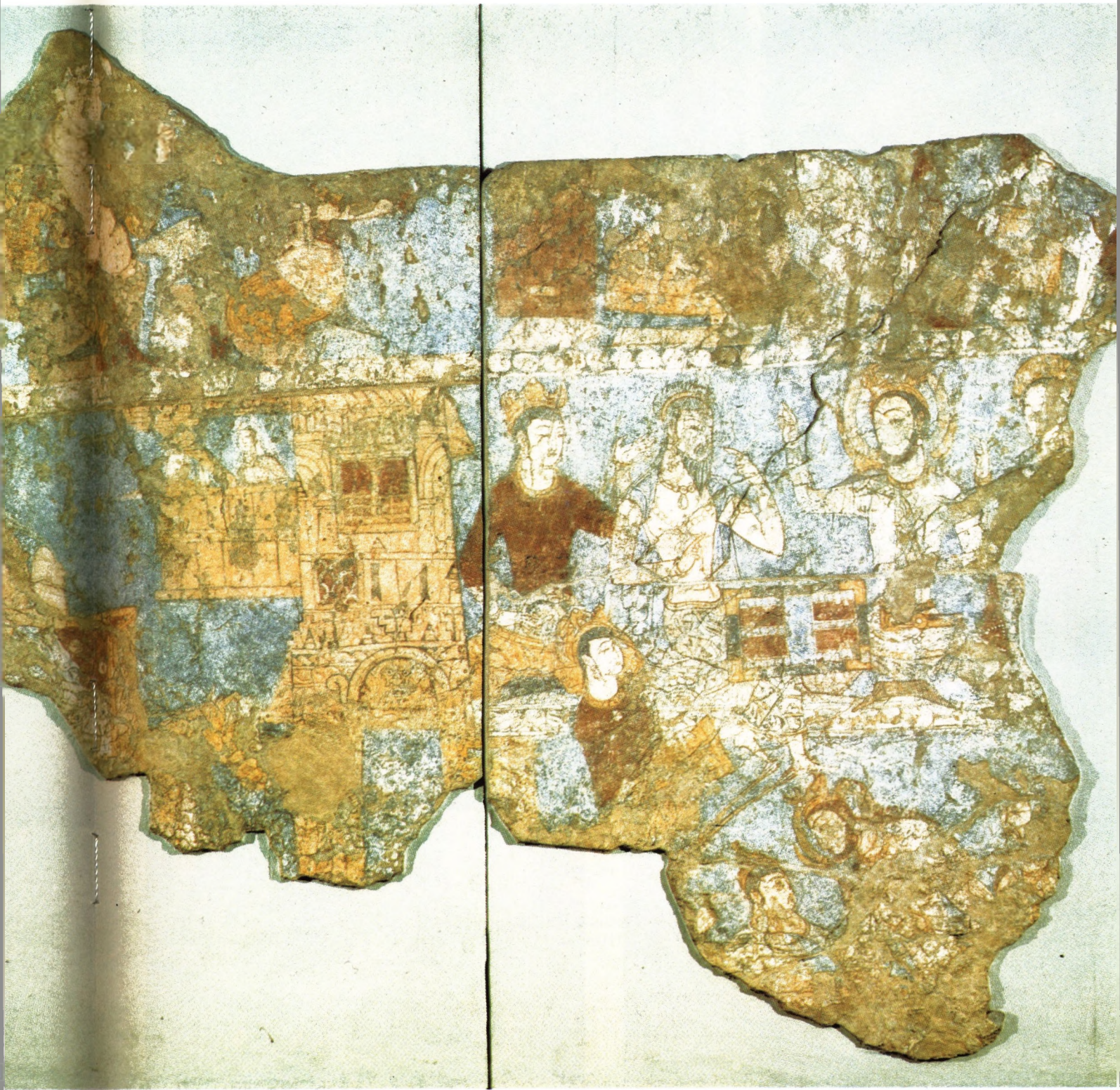


Buddha's head from Fayaz-tepe. 2nd-3rd centuries A.D.

"Game of Nard" fresco from Panjikent. 7th century A.D.











Figurine of a female deity from Khorezm. Terracotta. 1st-4th centuries A.D.

"The Musicians" scene. Airtam frieze. 1st-2nd centuries A.D.

Carved capital of decorative pilaster. Buddhist religious centre at Kara-tepe hill in Termez. White limestone. 2nd-3rd centuries A.D. The Hermitage, Leningrad

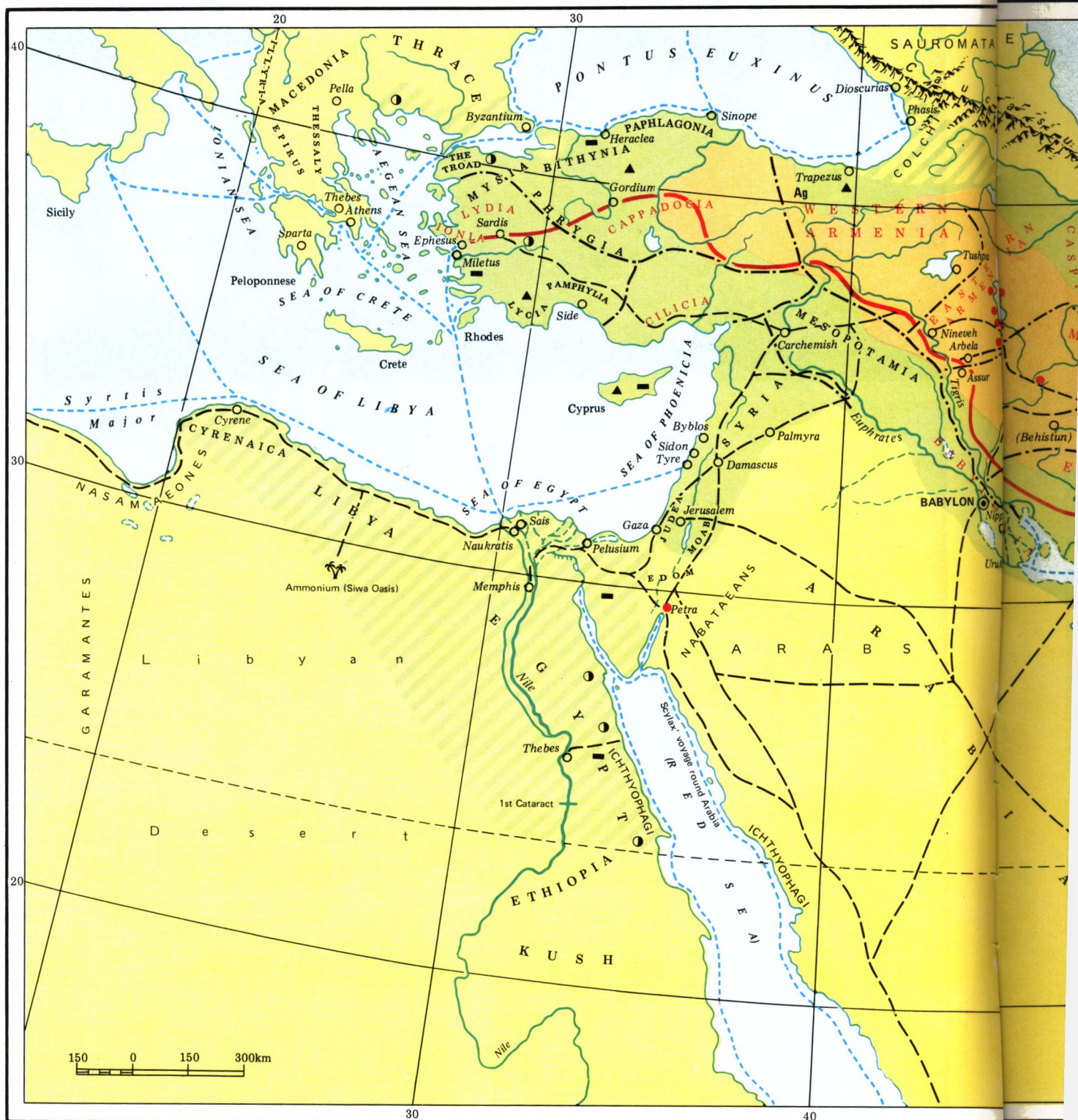
"The Musicians" scene. Detail. "The Drummer". Airtam frieze

"The Musicians" scene. Detail. "The Lute Player". Airtam frieze

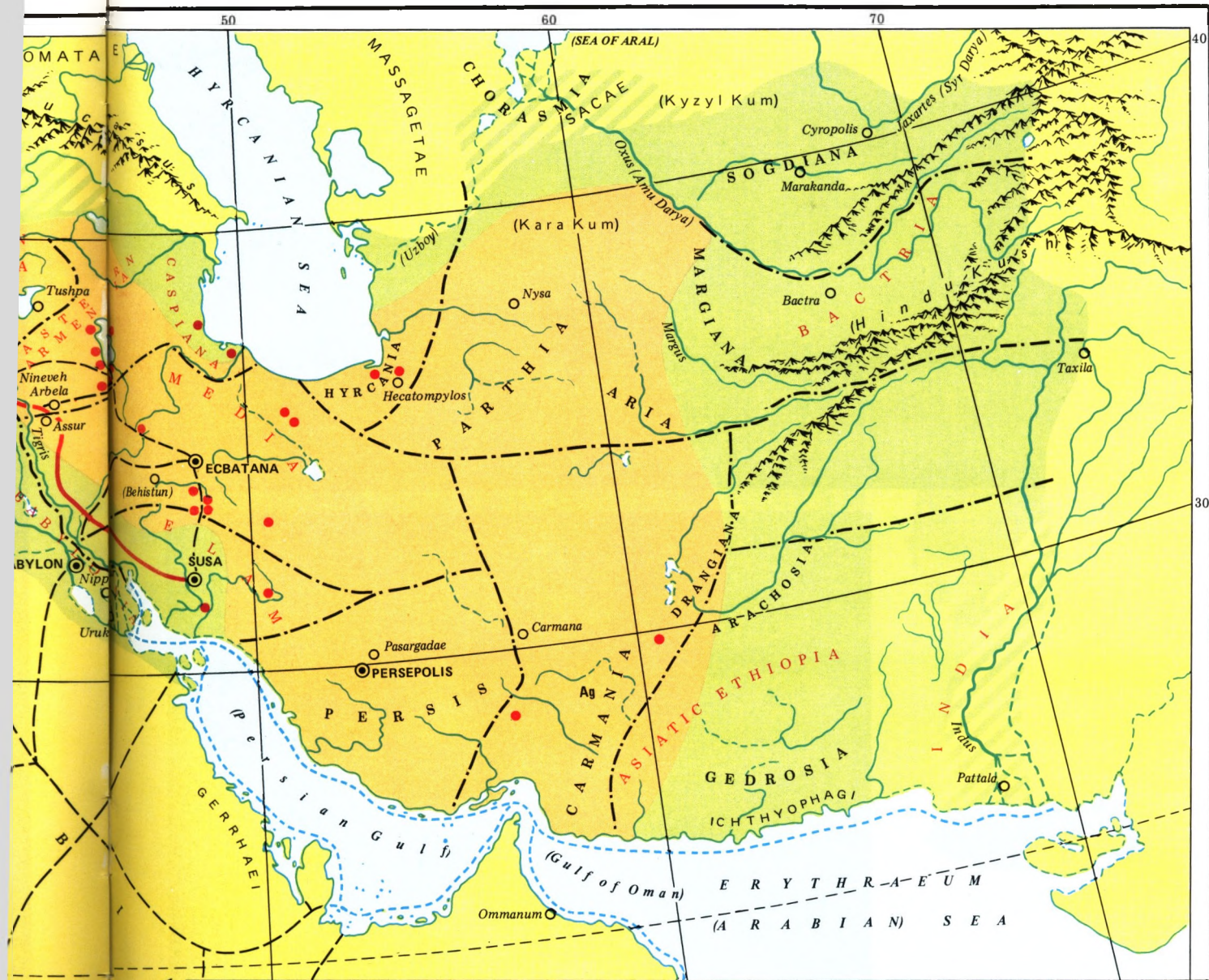












# CENTRAL ASIA AND IRAN

MYSIA

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Median Empire by the middle of 6th century B.C.

Persian Kingdom under Cyrus II (2nd half of the 6th century B.C.)

Territories conquered by the Persian Kingdom by the beginning of Darius I's reign

Putative boundaries of Persian satrapies

INDIA

Historical regions and countries

Peoples

Important archaeological monuments

Median Empire by the middle of 6th century B.C.

Persian Kingdom under Cyrus II (2nd half of the 6th century B.C.)

Territories conquered by the Persian Kingdom by the beginning of Darius I's reign

Putative boundaries of Persian satrapies

Names of Persian satrapies (6th-4th centuries B.C.)

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Capitals of Persian Empire

Other ancient cities

Gold mines

Silver mines

Copper mines

Iron mines

Trade routes

Royal Road

Ancient coastline

Modern names

(Gulf of Oman)





Seals from Mohenjo-Daro. Steatite.  
3rd-2nd millennia B.C.

Figurine of a priest from Mohenjo-Daro.  
Steatite. 3rd-2nd millennia B.C.







Queen in a garden. Fresco. Ajanta. 5th-6th centuries A.D.

"Leonine Capital" at Sarnath. 3rd century B.C.









Yakshinis. Bhutesar. Sandstone. 2nd century A.D. Indian Museum, Calcutta

Scene from Jataka of Mahakaji. Relief on the Bharhut stupa. 2nd century B.C. Indian Museum, Calcutta

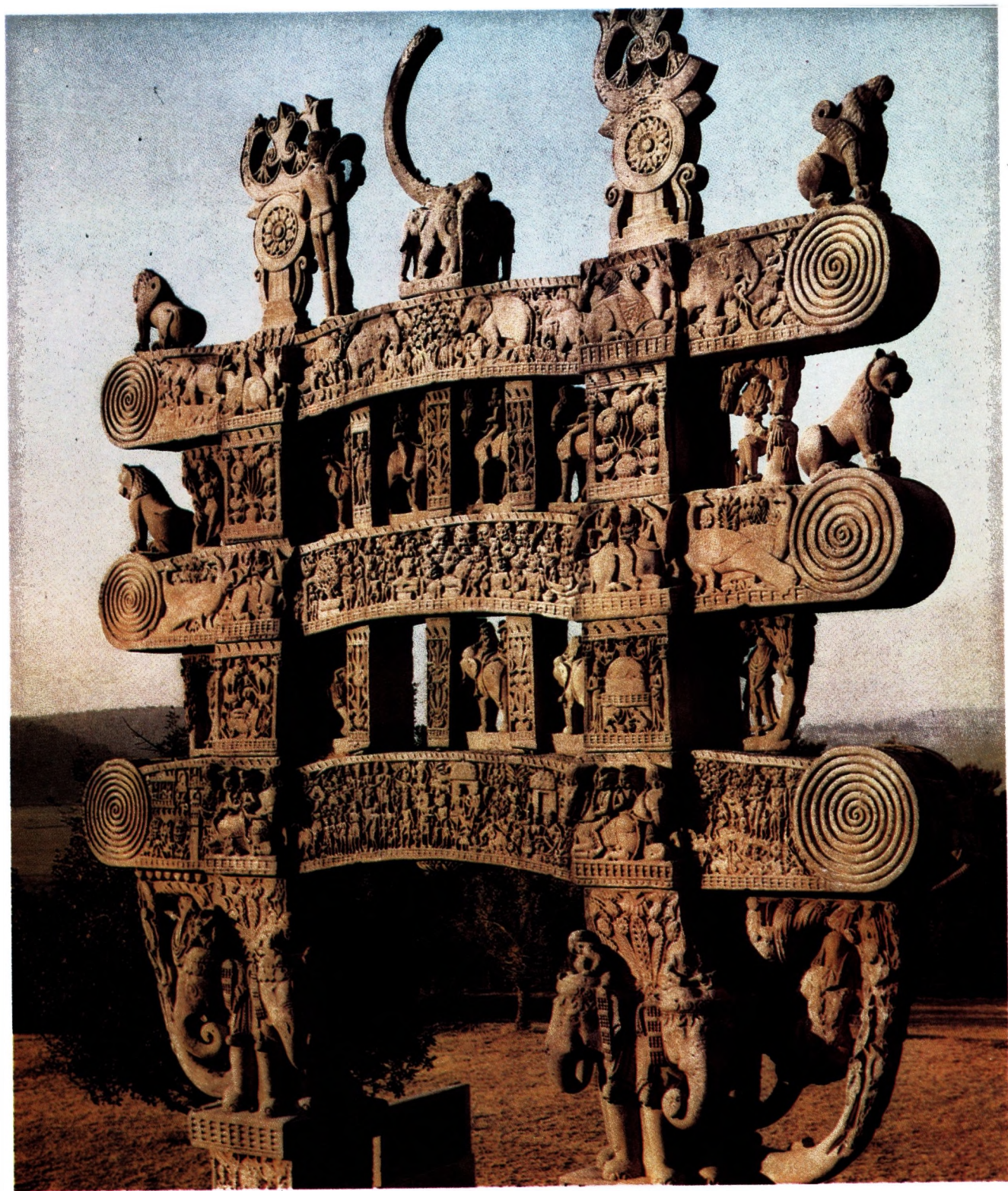
Bas-relief. Nagarjunakonda. 2nd-3rd centuries A. D. National Museum, Delhi

Statue of Buddha. Sandstone. Archaeological Museum, Sarnath

North gate of the stupa at Sanchi. 2nd century B.C.



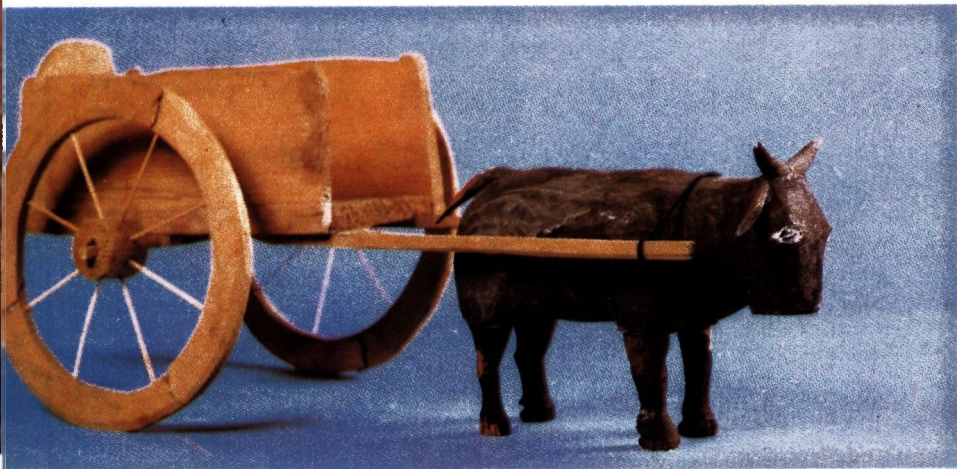












Man with broad-hilted weapon in his belt. Nephrite. From excavations of the Ju Hao tomb. Shang-Yin epoch. 2nd millennium B.C.

"Stone man" in the sitting posture. Stone. From the excavations of the Ju Hao tomb. Shang-Yin epoch. 2nd millennium B.C.

Cart drawn by an ox. Wood. From excavations in the province of Kansu. Han epoch. 2nd century B.C.-2nd century A.D.

Bronze image of mythological winged monster. From the excavations of the tomb of the ruler of the state of Chungshan. Chankuo epoch. 5th-3rd centuries B.C.





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Figurine of a warrior from the tomb of emperor Ch'in Shihhuangti. Terracotta. From excavations near Sian. Ch'in epoch. 3rd century B.C.

Head of a warrior's figurine from the tomb of emperor Ch'in Shihhuangti. Terracotta. From excavations near Sian. Ch'in epoch. 3rd century B.C.

Gown. From excavations near Changsha. Han epoch. 2nd century B.C.-2nd century A.D.

Painted wooden figurines. From excavations in the province of Kansu. Han epoch. 2nd century B.C.-2nd century A.D.

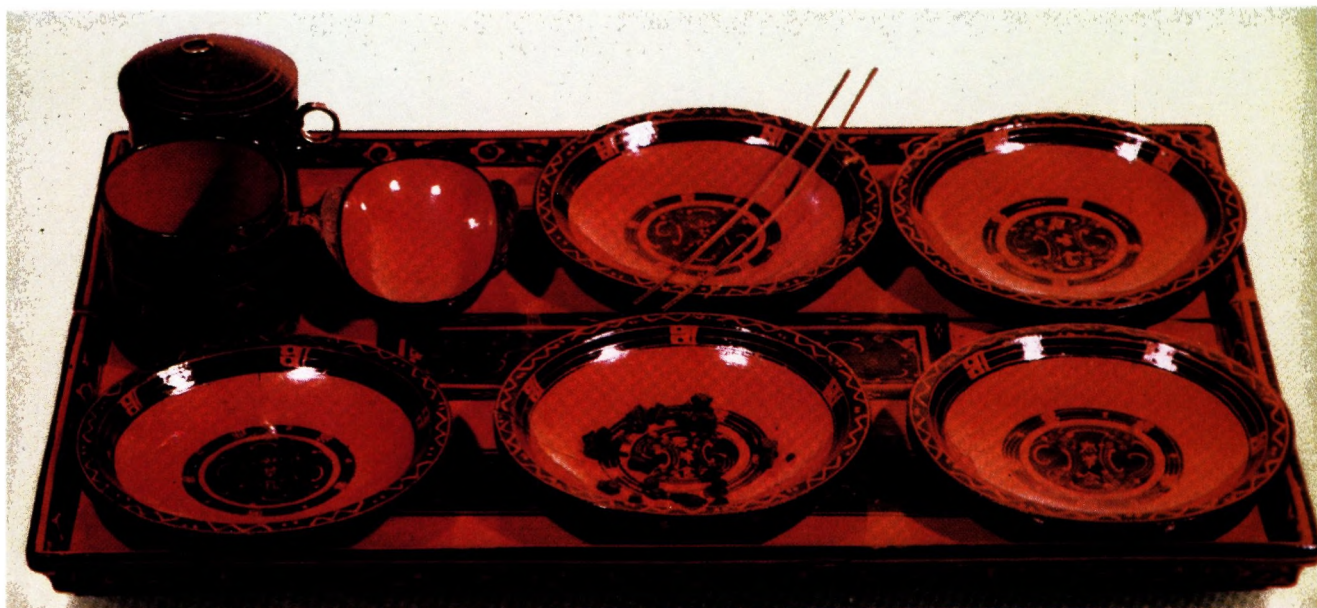
Ceramic moulds for casting coins. Wang Mang epoch. 1st century A.D. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Cover. Lacquer. From excavations near Changsha. Han epoch. 2nd century B.C.-2nd century A.D.

Bronze galloping horses. From excavations in the Kansu province. Han epoch. 2nd century A.D.



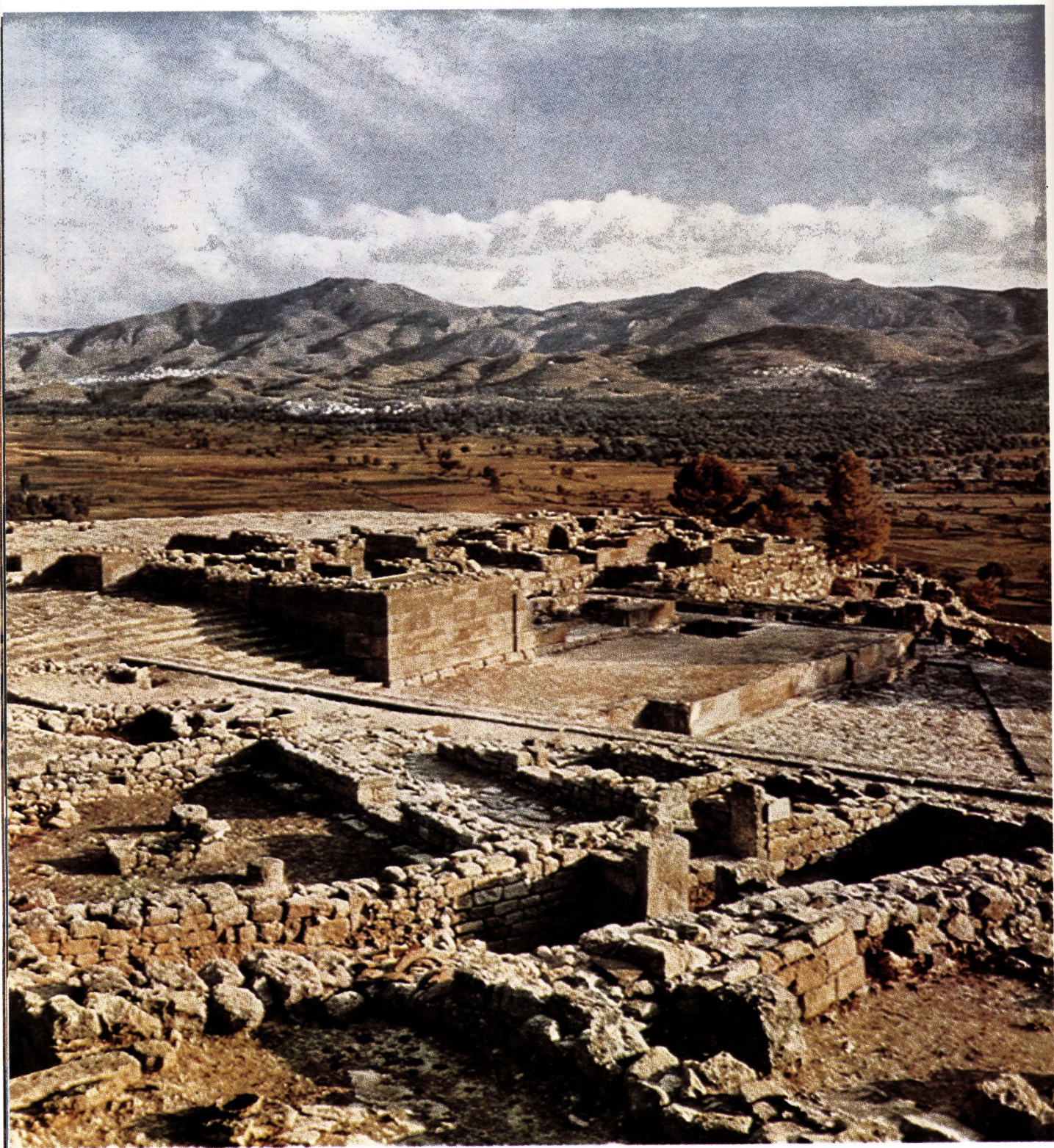
















Palace at Phaestos. Between 2000 and 1500 B.C.

So-called "La Parisienne", fragment of a fresco from the palace of Knossos. C. 1500 B.C. Heraclion. Archaeological Museum

The Lion gate at Mycenae. End of the 14th-15th century B.C.

Funeral mask, so-called mask of Agamemnon, from the tomb V of the circle A. Gold. Second half of the 16th century B.C. National Museum, Athens





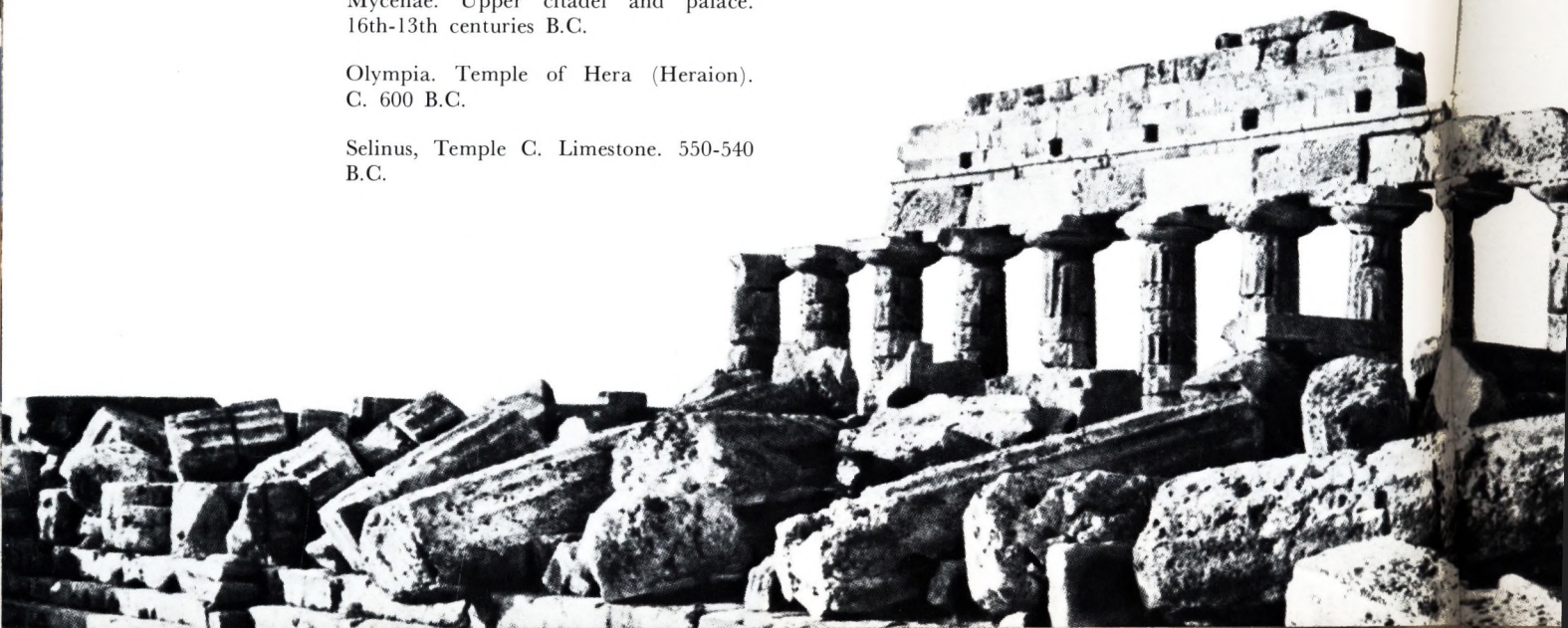


Mycenae. Upper citadel and palace.  
16th-13th centuries B.C.

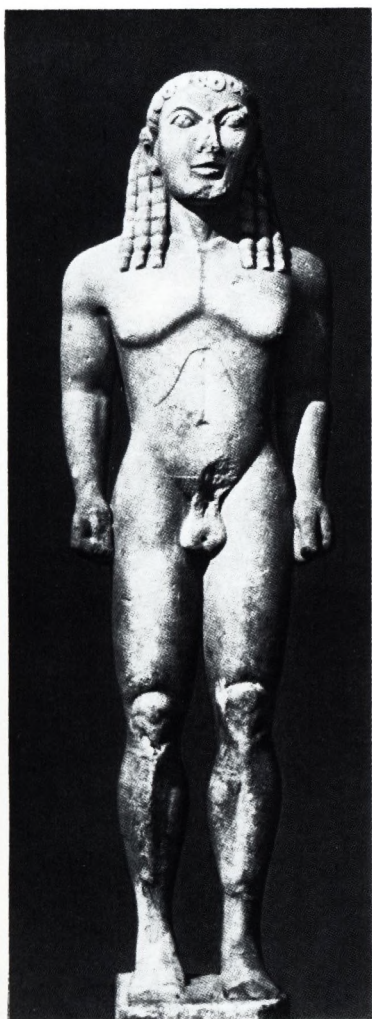


Olympia. Temple of Hera (Heraion).  
C. 600 B.C.

Selinus, Temple C. Limestone. 550-540  
B.C.







Statues of Cleobis and Biton. Marble.  
590-580 B.C.

Kore 671. Marble. C. 520 B.C. Acropolis  
Museum, Athens







Temple of Poseidon at Cape Sounion. Marble. 450-440 B.C.

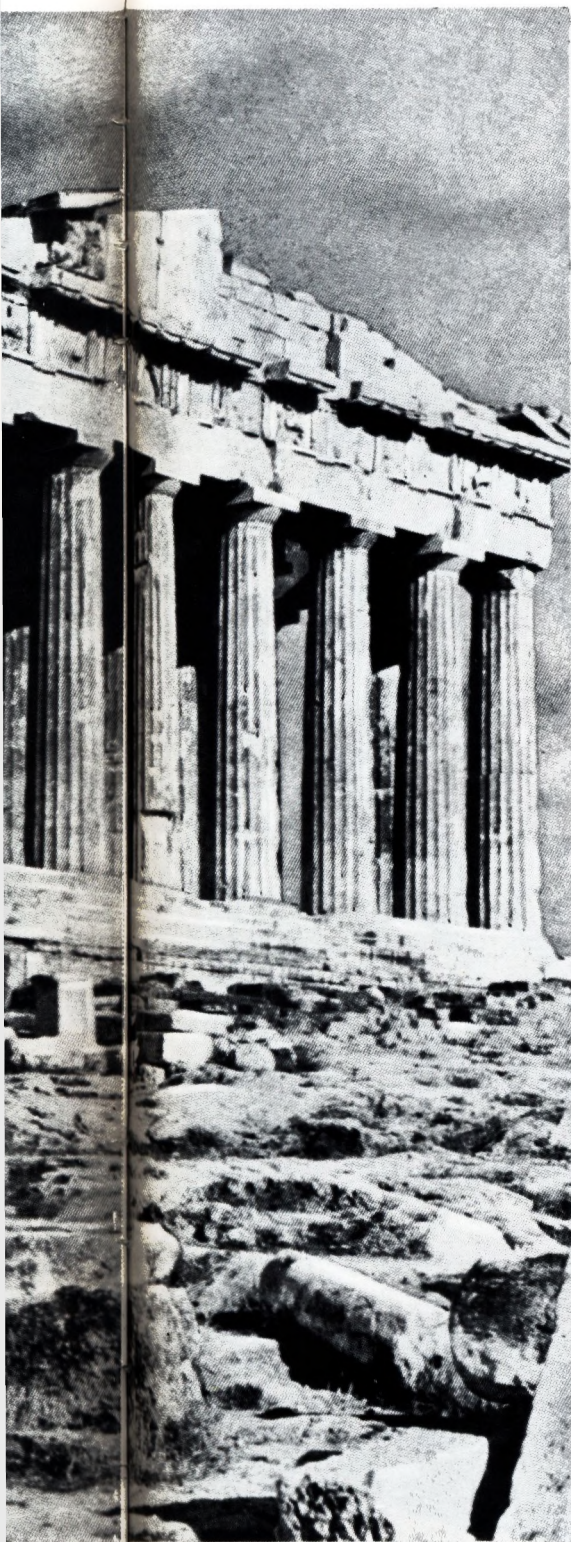
Parthenon on Athenian Acropolis. Marble. 447-432 B.C.

Parthenon. Fragment of the procession. Equestrians. Western frieze

Erechtheion temple on Athenian Acropolis. Marble. 421-406 B.C.











Head of the statue of a youth, the so-called "fair-haired ephebe". Marble. C. 480 B.C. Acropolis Museum, Athens

Myron. Discobolus. C. 450 B.C. Roman marble copy. Rome National Museum.

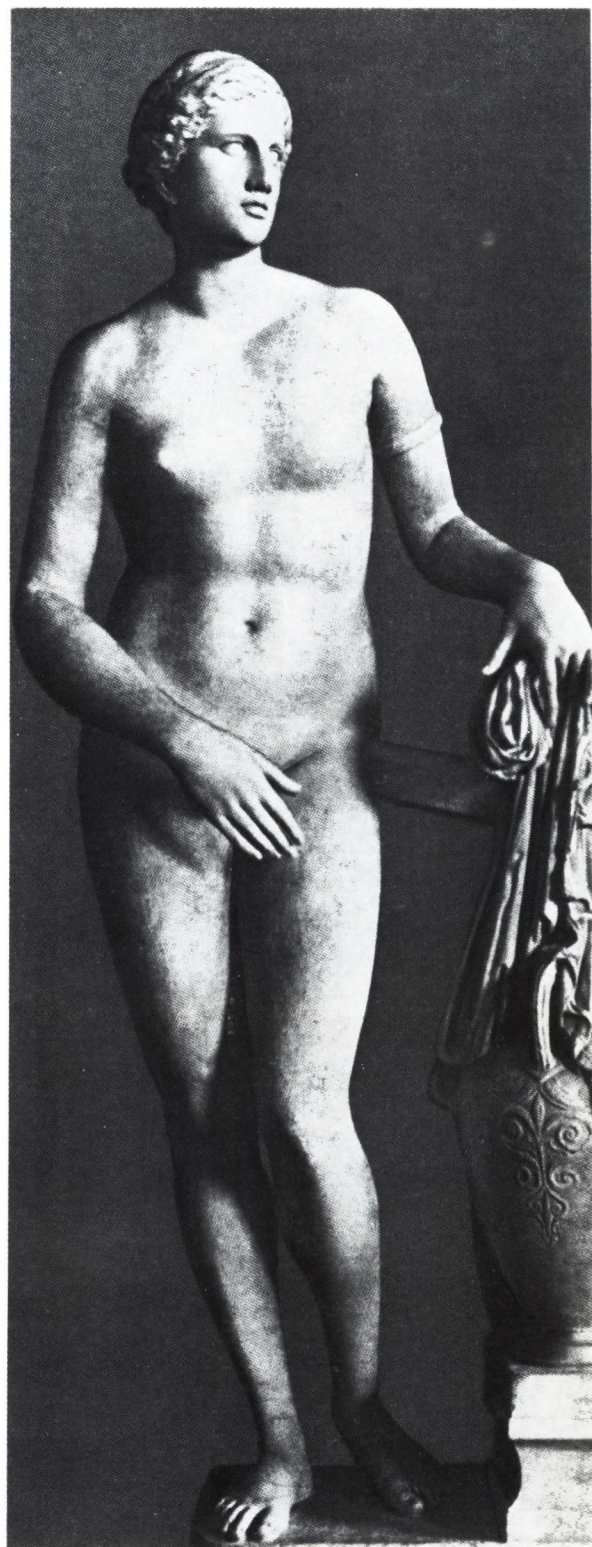
Syracusan decadrachma, so-called demaration. Silver. C. 479 B.C. British Museum, London

Statue of Poseidon. Bronze. 460-450 B.C. National Museum, Athens

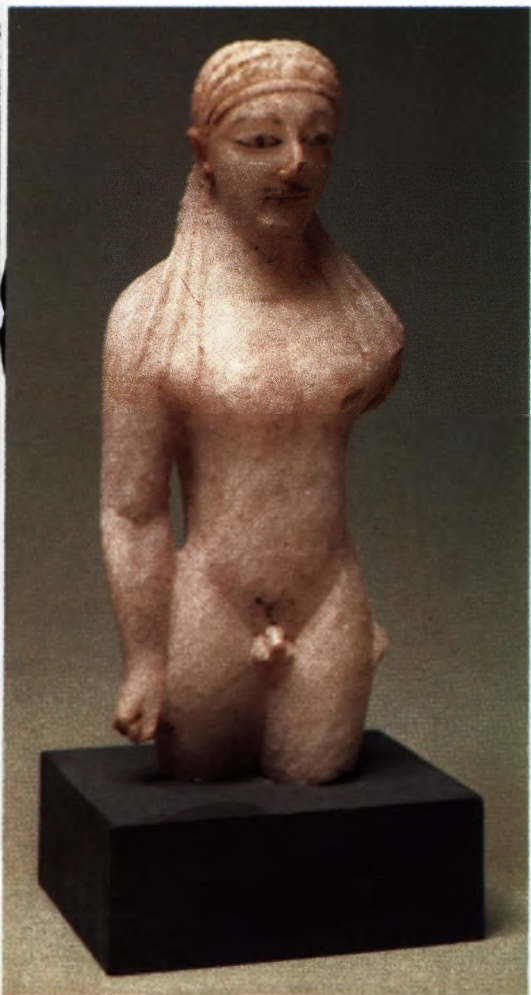
Praxiteles. Aphrodite of Cnidos. C. 350 B.C. A reconstruction in gypsum from Roman copies. Museum of Moulds, Munich











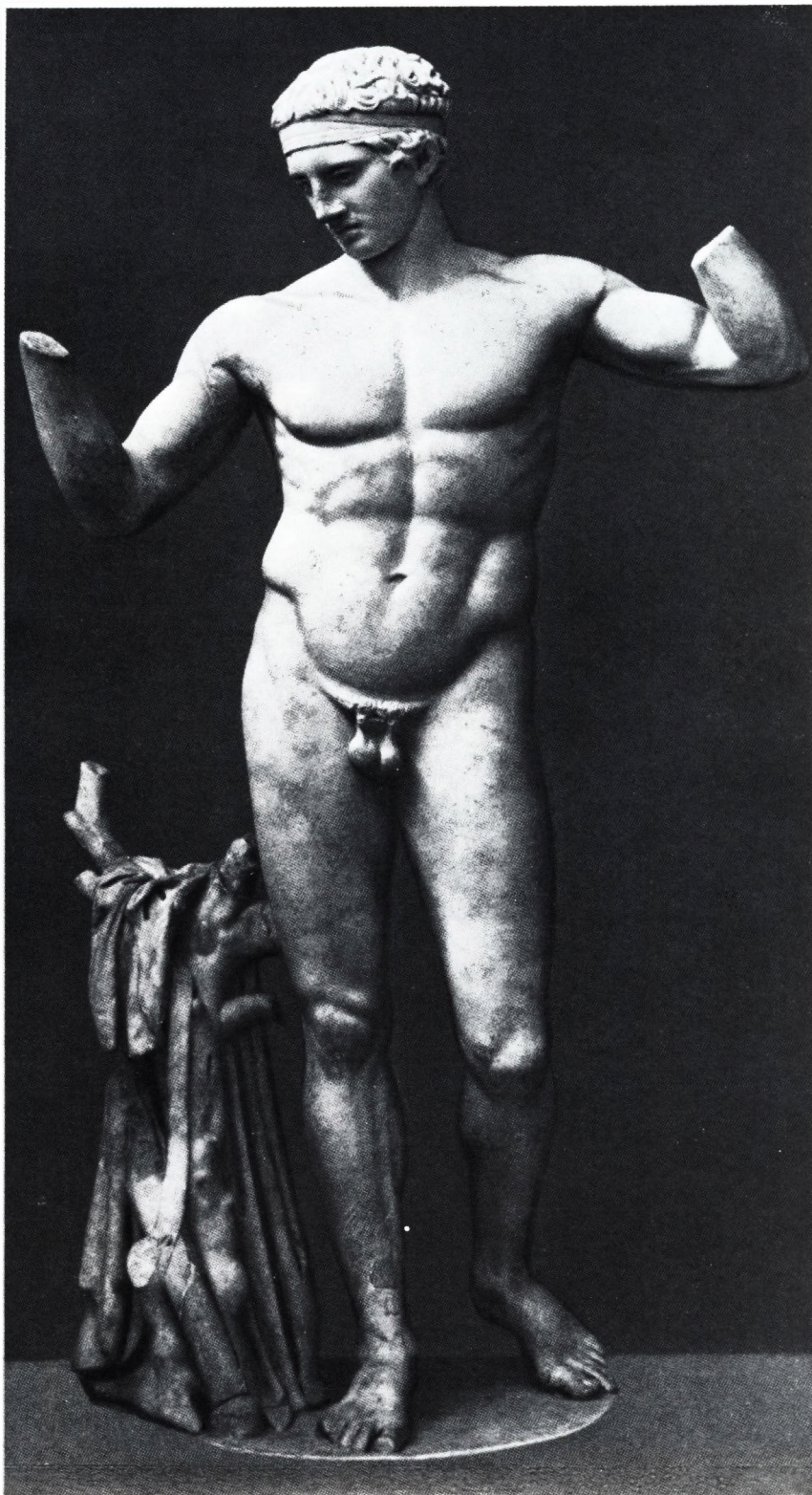
Statuette of a youth (the so-called Apollo of Naucratis). Alabaster. C. mid-6th century B.C.

Polyclitus. Diadumenus. C. 420 B.C.

Scopas. Maenad. C. 350 B.C. Roman marble copy. The collection of sculpture. Dresden

Statue on a tomb of an Athenian equestrian. Marble. C. 370 B.C.

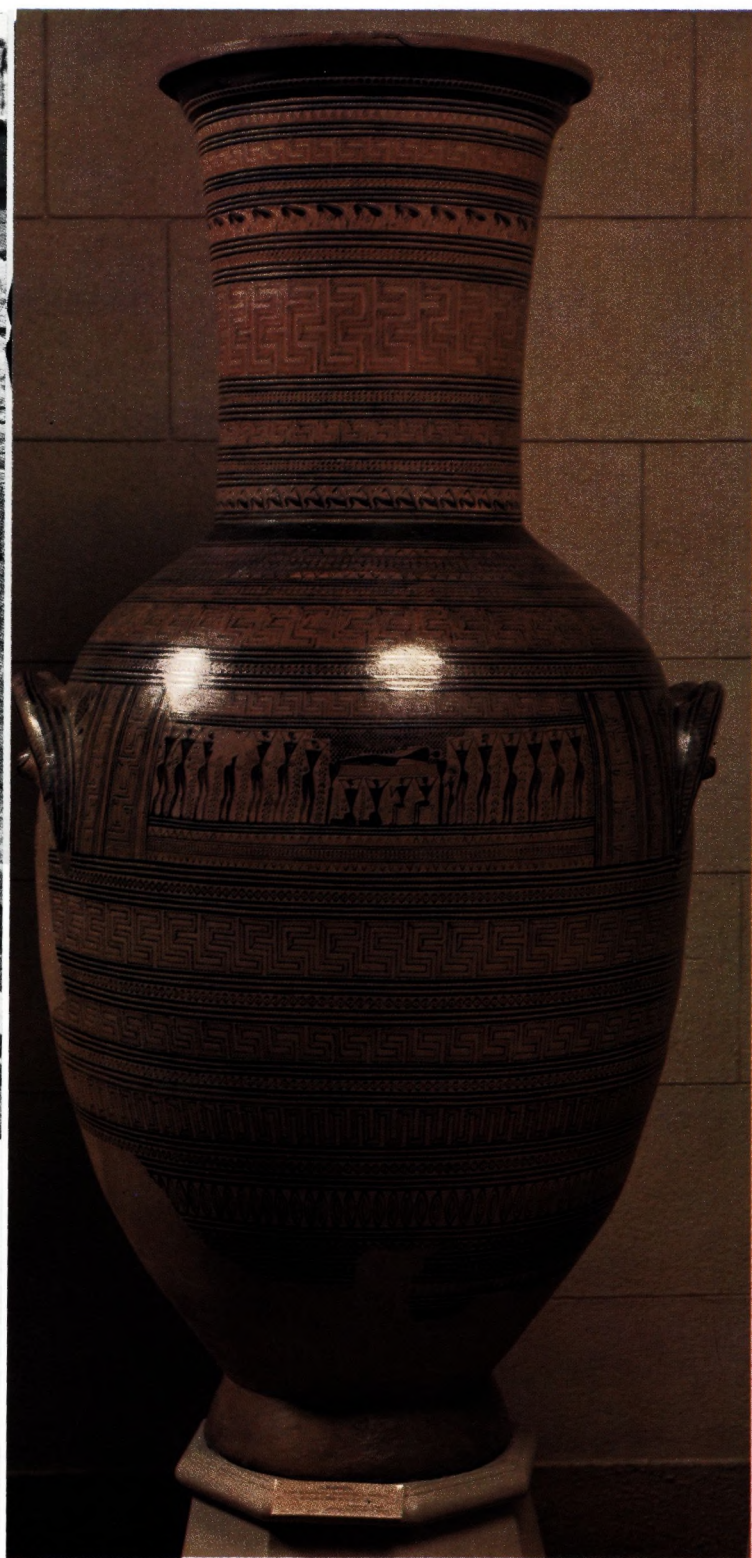
Battle between Greeks and Persians. Relief of the so-called Alexander's Sarcophagus. Marble. 330-320 B.C. Archaeological Museum, Istanbul











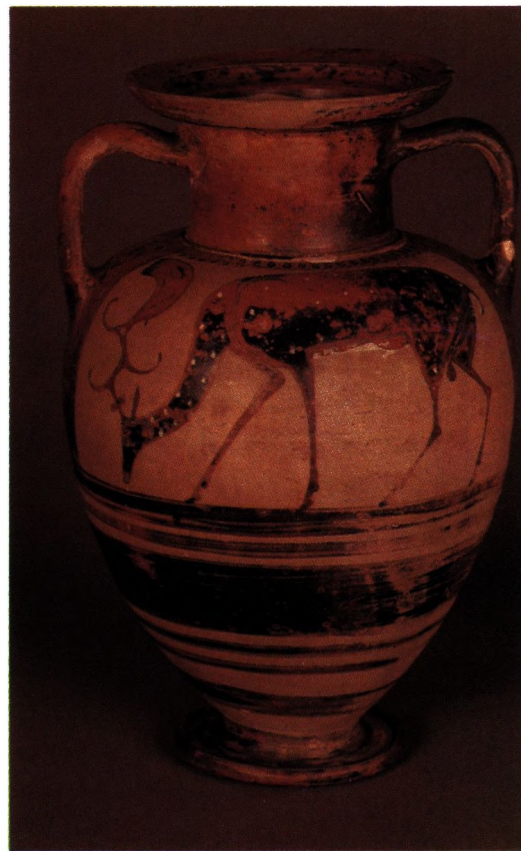




Vase from Dipylon (copy). Clay. Mid-8th century B.C.

Red-figure crater. "Gigantomachy". Painted earthenware. 4th century B.C. Apulia. The Lycurgus Painter

Black-figure amphora with dancing maenads. Clay. 540s B.C.



Black-figure amphora. Clay. C. 530 B.C. Attica.

Amphora. A Stag. Earthenware. Third quarter of the 6th century B.C. Clazomenae. Enmann Class



Red-figure crater by the "master of Villa Giulia". Clay. Mid-5th century B.C.





Acroterion from Phanagoria. Marble.  
Third quarter of the 4th century B.C.

Mirror stand. Aphrodite with Erotes.  
Bronze. C. 480 B.C. Aegina



# CLASSICAL GREECE

LYDIA

Historical regions



Major cities and political centres

*Delphi*

Important cult centres



Other ancient settlements



Persian dependencies in the early 5th century B.C.



Sparta's allies in the 5th century B.C.



Allies



Trade



Gold



Silver



Copper

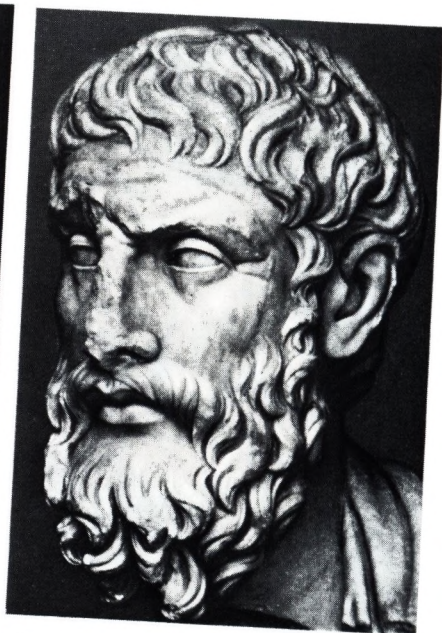
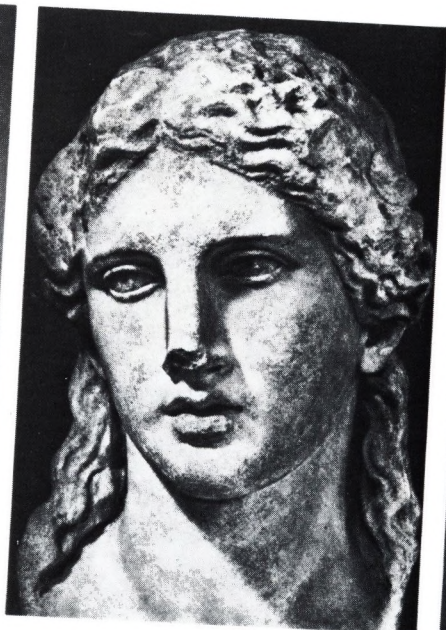
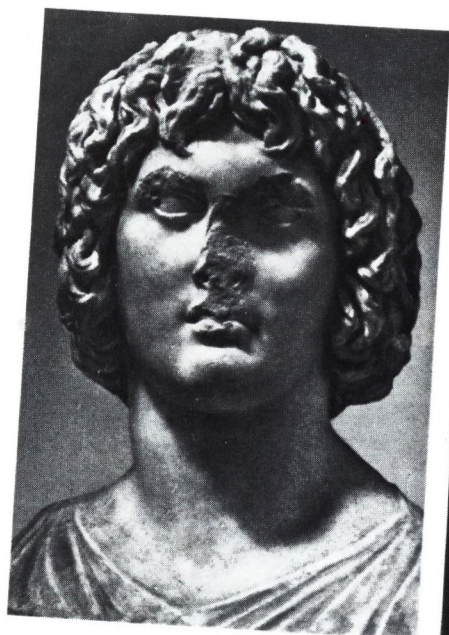


Iron

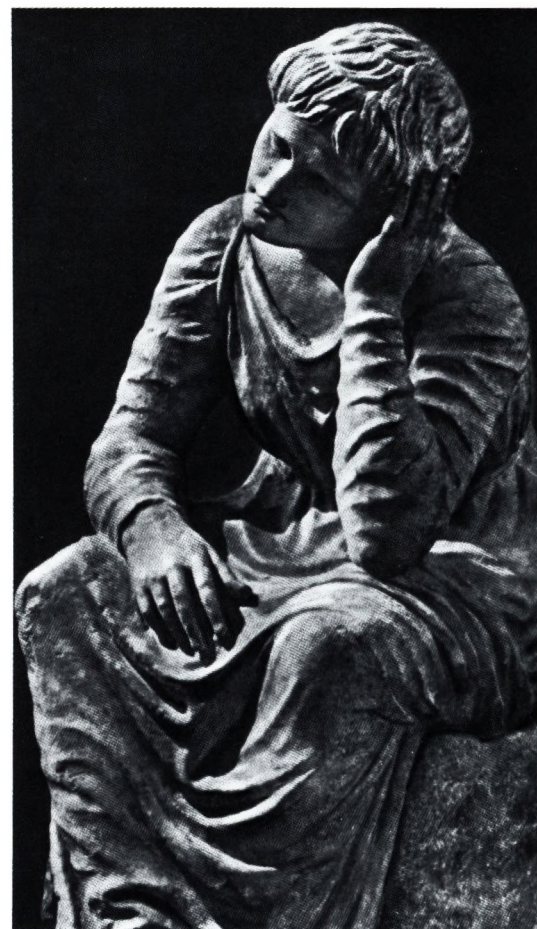
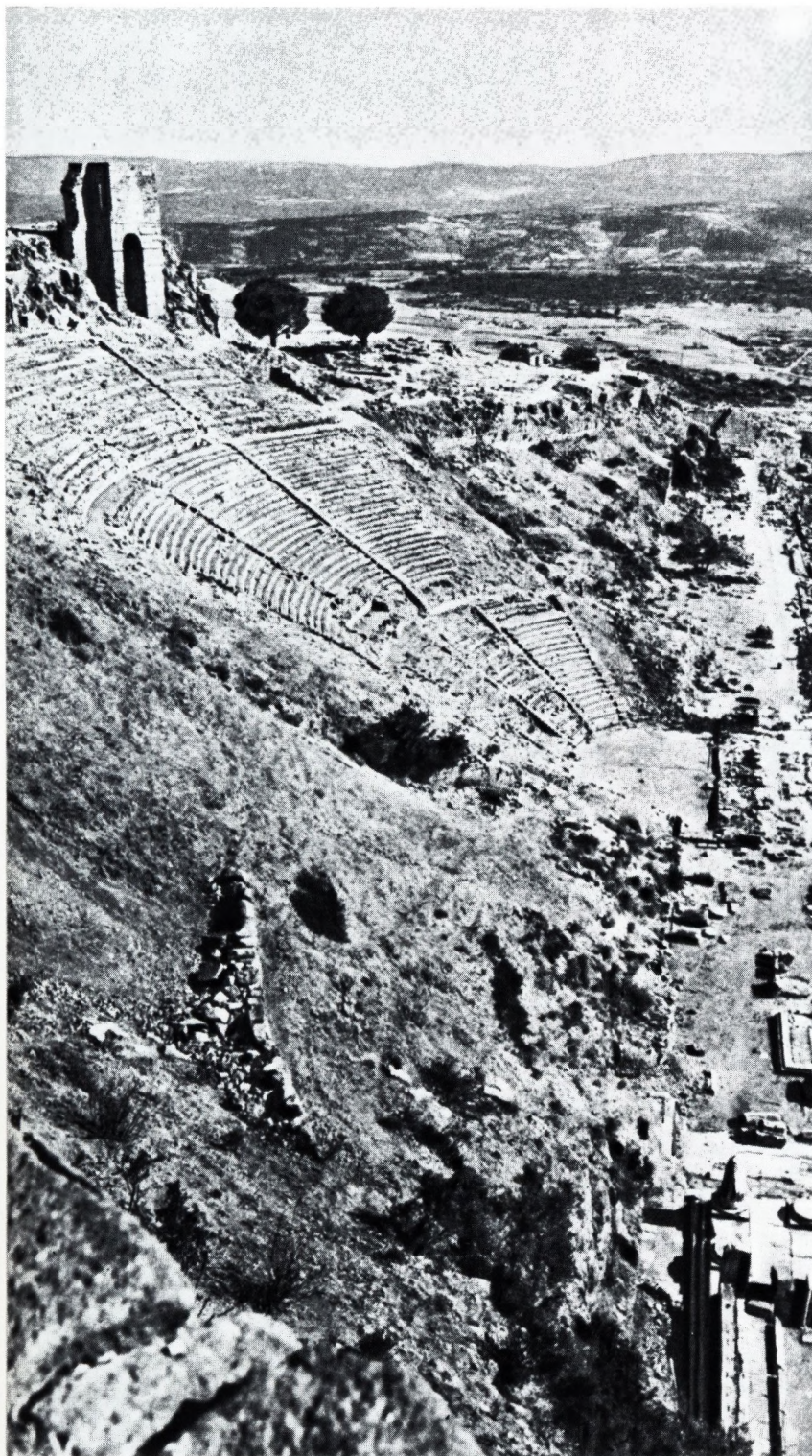












Man's head, the so-called "Eubuleus". Marble. Second half of the 4th century B.C. National Museum, Athens

Head of Dionysus. Marble. Early 3rd century B.C. Thasos Museum

Head of Epicurus. First quarter of the 3rd century B.C. Antique replica in marble. Metropolitan Museum, New York

Temple of Apollo at Didyma. Main façade. Marble. 3rd-2nd centuries B.C.

Theatre at Pergamum. Basalt. 3rd century B.C.

Seated Woman. Marble. Second half of the 4th century B.C. Staatliche Museen, Berlin





The Pergamum great altar. North-western corner. Marble and limestone. First half of the 2nd century B.C. Staatliche Museen, Berlin

Zeus and Porphyrian. Detail of the eastern frieze of the Pergamum altar. Marble. 180-160 B.C. Staatliche Museen, Berlin

Terracotta figurines from Tanagra and Myrina. Clay. 4th-3rd centuries B.C.











Façade of a rock tomb at Cyrene. 3rd-2nd centuries B.C.

Intaglio. "Heron in Flight". Carved chalcidony and gold. Second half of the 5th century B.C.

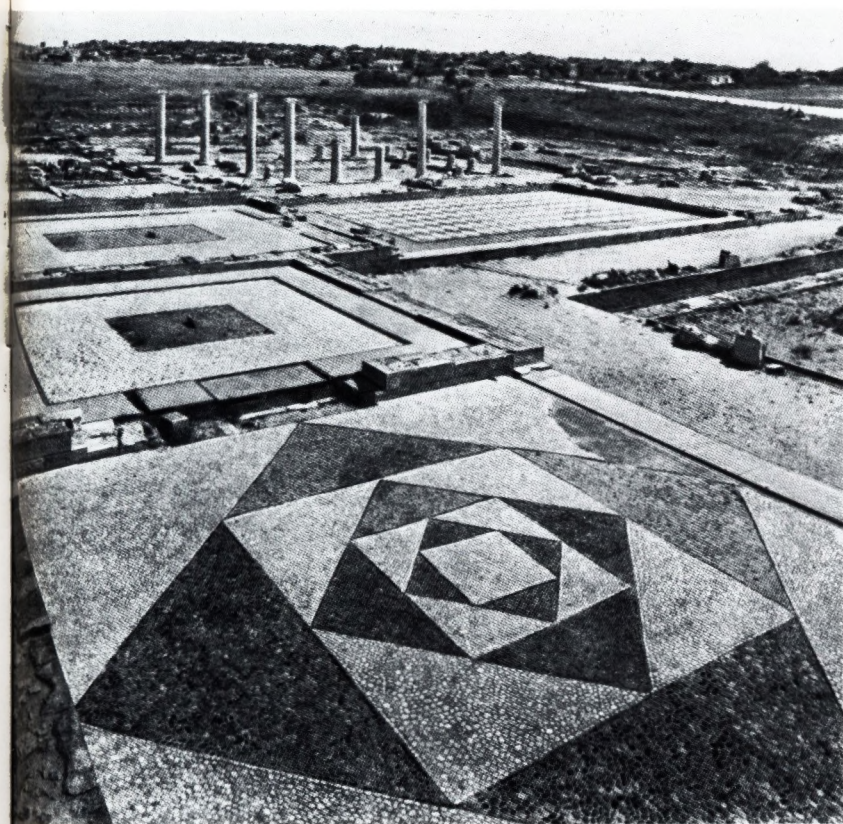
Mosaic floors at Pella. 4th-3rd centuries B.C.

Statue of Demetrius I of Syria. Bronze. C. 150 B.C. Capitol Museum, Rome

Black-figure kylix with horsemen. Clay. 4th century B.C. Corinth











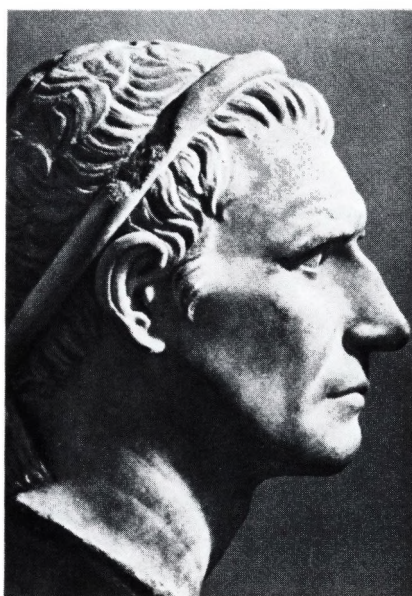
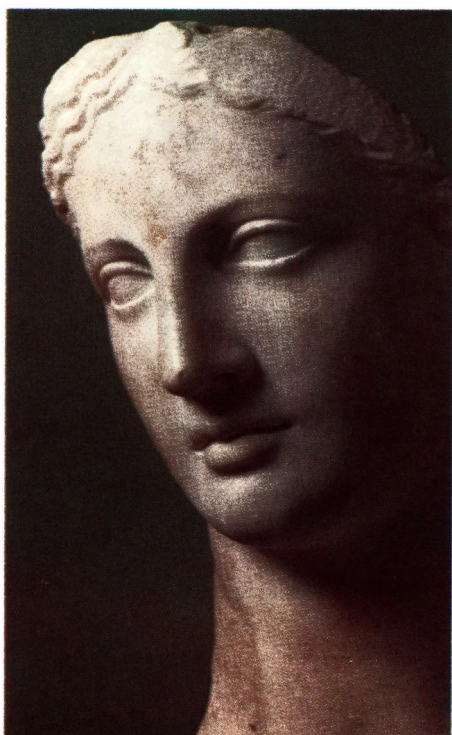
Dying Gaul. 220-210 B.C. Antique replica in marble. Capitol Museum, Rome

Head of a goddess from Alexandria. Marble. 3rd century B.C.

Portrait of Antiochus III. C. 200 B.C. Antique replica in marble. Louvre, Paris

Statue of Aphrodite. C. 250 B.C. Antique replica in marble. National Museum, Rome

The Victory of Samothrace. Marble. C. 190 B.C. Louvre, Paris





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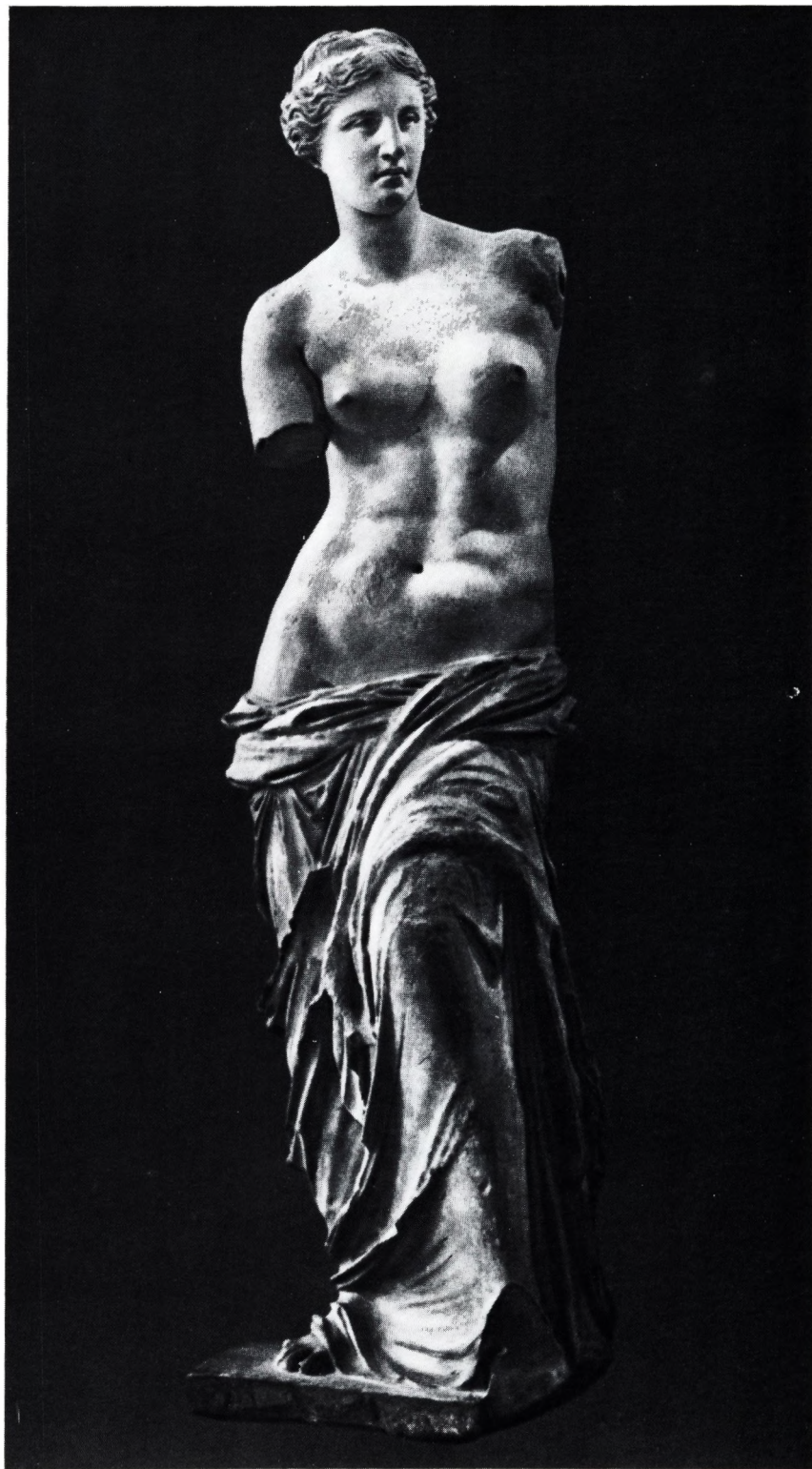




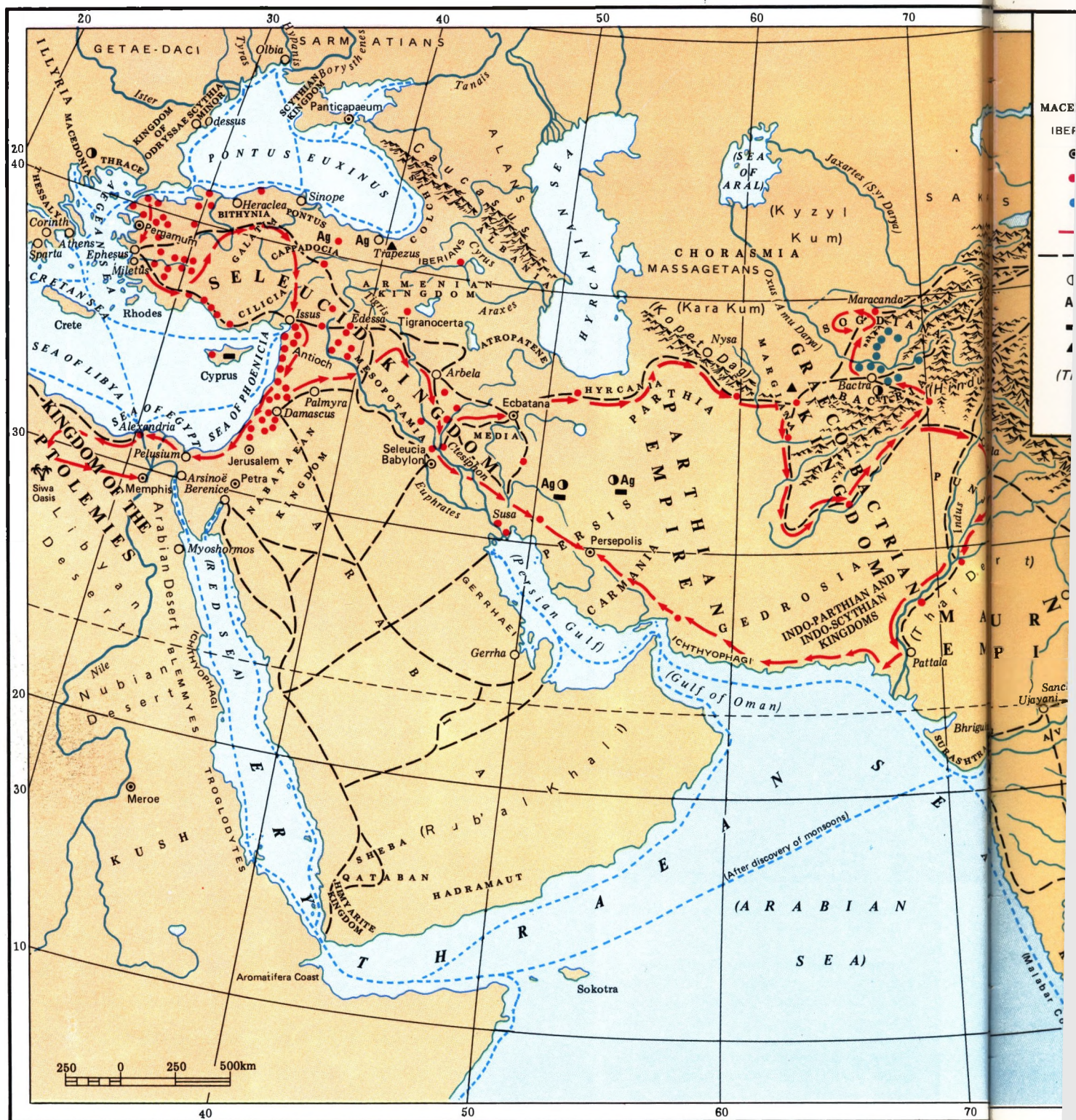
Lekuthos. Sphinx. Painted earthenware.  
Late 5th century B.C. Attica

Statue of Aphrodite (from the collection of Khvoshchinsky). Marble. Roman copy from a Greek original from the 3rd century B.C.

Statue of Aphrodite, the so-called Venus de Milo. Marble. End of the 2nd century B.C. Louvre, Paris



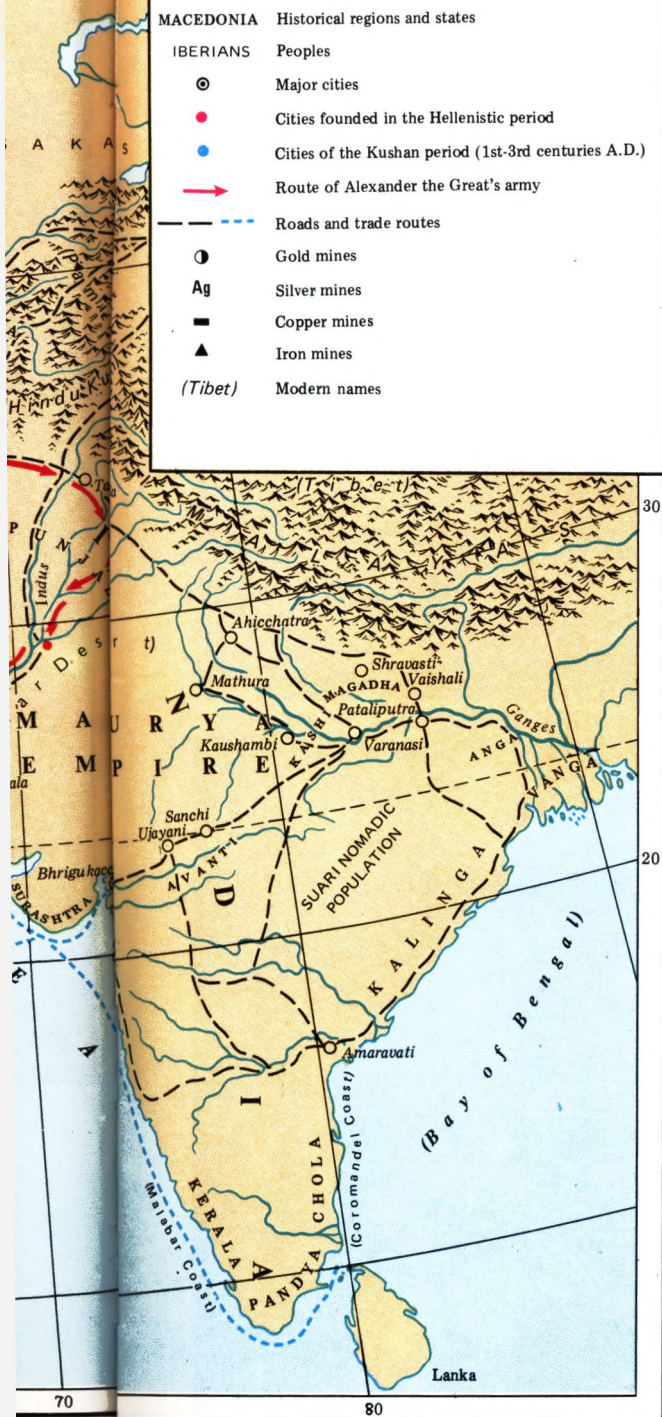






## HELLENISTIC STATES

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| MACEDONIA | Historical regions and states                        |
| IBERIANS  | Peoples  |
| ⊙         | Major cities   |
| ●         | Cities founded in the Hellenistic period             |
| ●         | Cities of the Kushan period (1st-3rd centuries A.D.) |
| →         | Route of Alexander the Great's army                  |
| — — —     | Roads and trade routes                               |
| ⦿         | Gold mines   |
| Ag        | Silver mines   |
| ■         | Copper mines   |
| ▲         | Iron mines   |
| (Tibet)   | Modern names   |



Head of a satyr in pine wreath. Marble.  
Roman replica of 2nd century original









She-wolf of Capitol. Bronze. Second quarter of the 5th century B.C. Palazzo of Conservatives, Rome

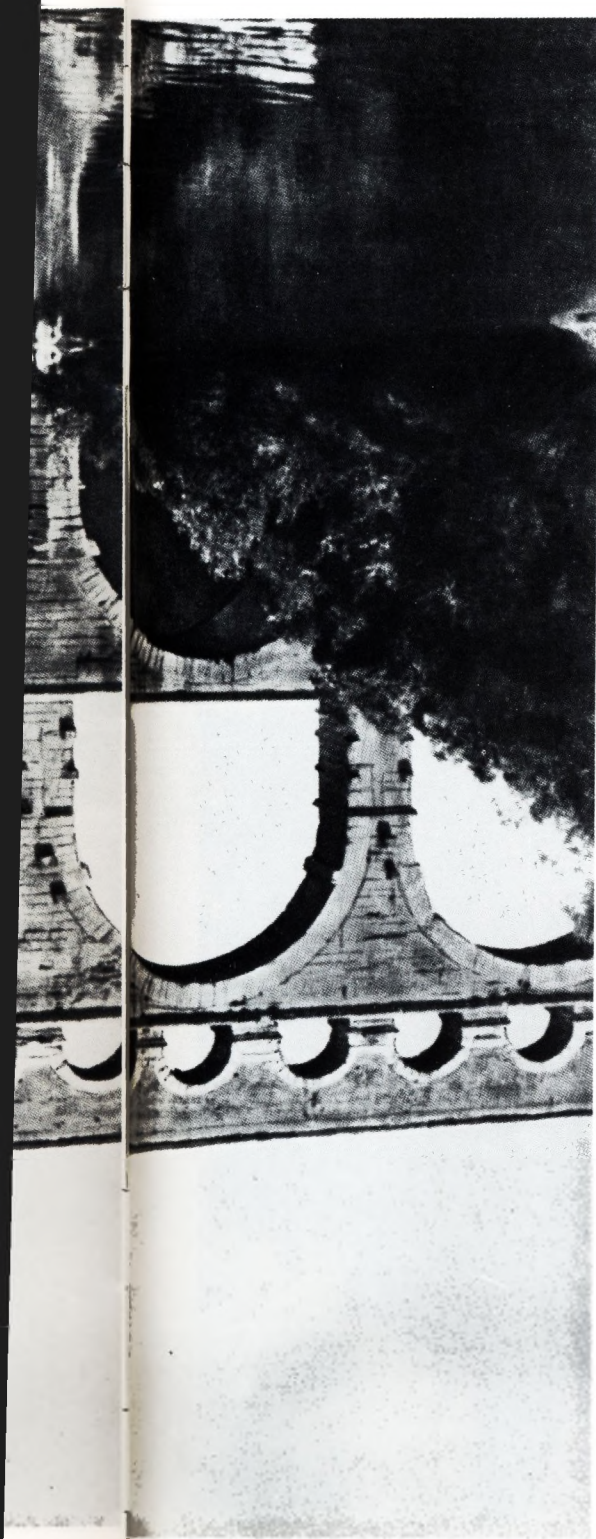
Wrestling scene. Fragment from painting on the François Etruscan tomb at Vulchi 2nd century B.C. Villa Albani, Rome

Appian way, near Rome: 312 B.C.

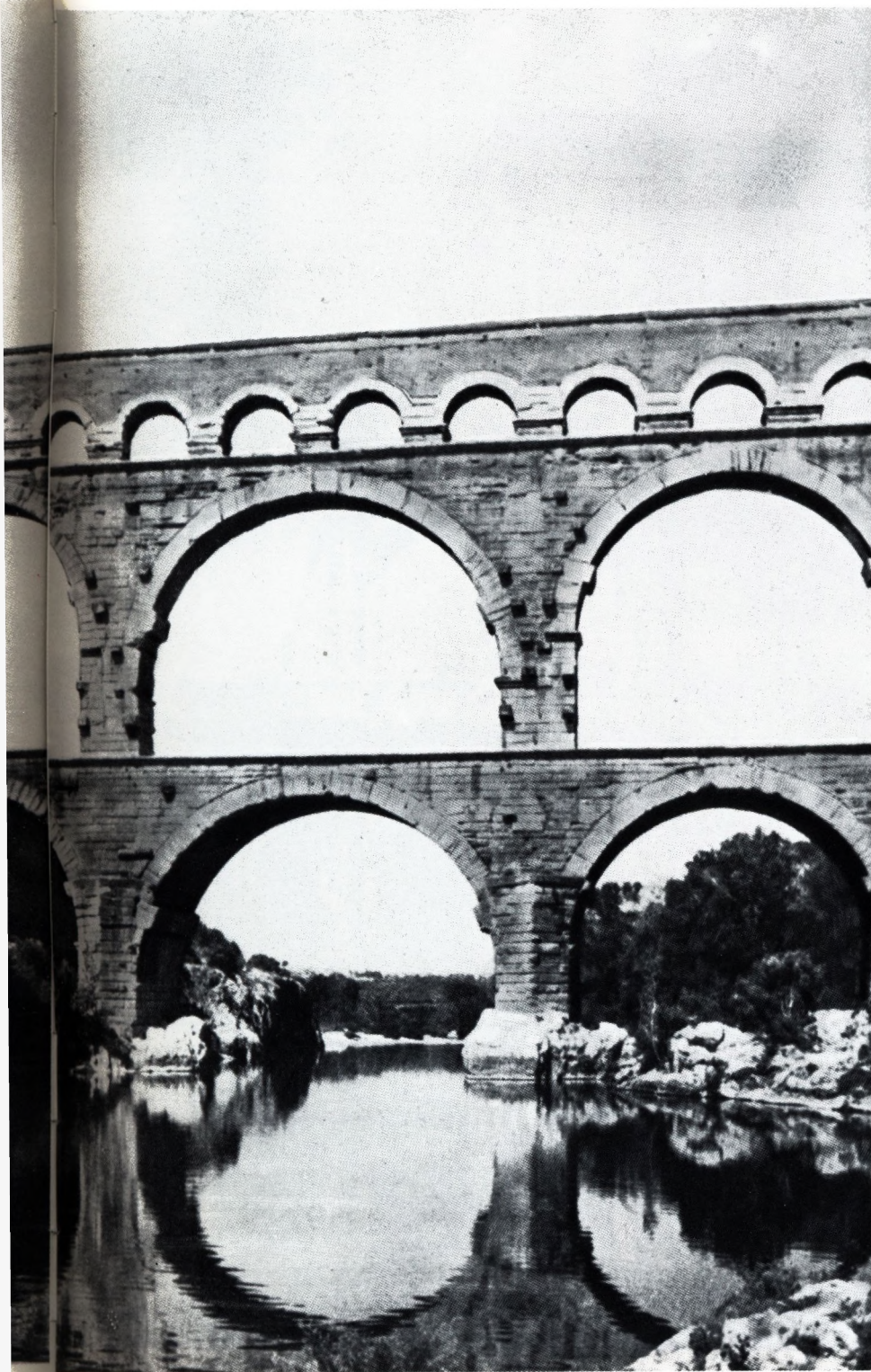
Fortune's shrine at Palestrina. View from north-west. After 80 B.C.











Statue of Augustus from Prima Porta.  
Marble. C. 20 B.C. Vatican Museums,  
Rome

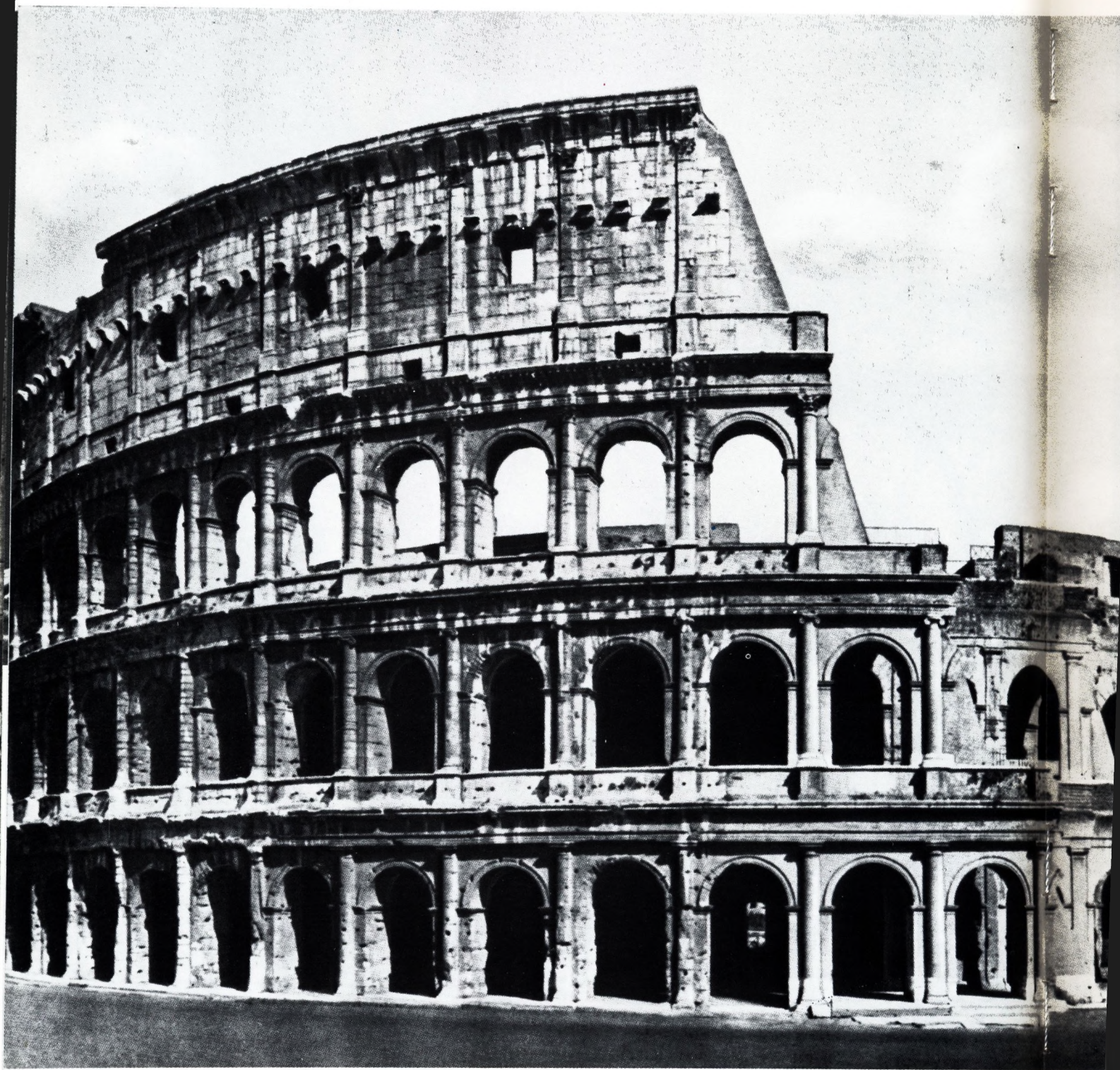
Aqueduct in Nîmes. End of the 1st century  
A.D.

As. Copper. C. A.D. 37-41. Ashmolean  
Museum, Oxford

Coin with the portrait of Domitian.  
A.D. 80-90. British Museum, London

Sesterce Aurihalk, C. A.D. 66. British  
Museum, London







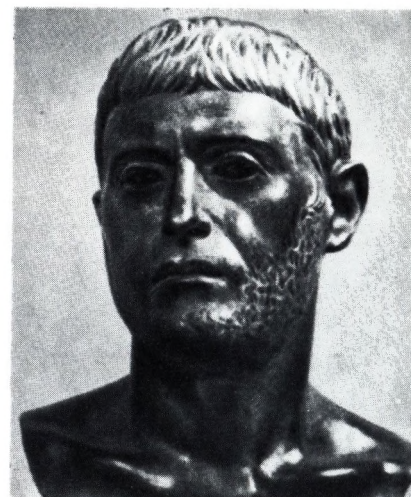
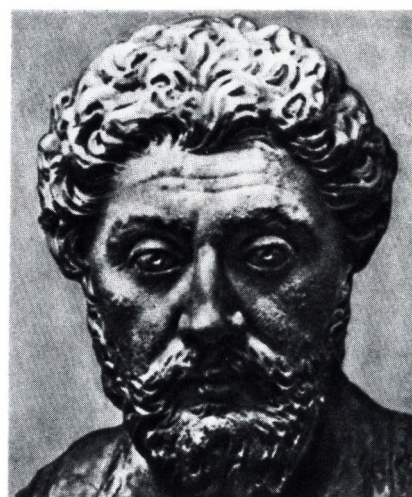
The Flavii Amphitheatre, the so-called Colosseum. A.D. 80

Tombstone of the Vibius family. Marble. Second half of the 1st century B.C. Vatican Museums, Rome

Temple of Hadrian at Ephesos, 2nd century A.D.







Statue of the ruler of Gorgippia (from Anapa). Marble. 2nd century A.D.

Portrait of a Roman woman, the so-called Syrian. Marble, 160s-170s. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Helmet with a visor from Ribchester. Great Britain, Bronze. End of the 1st century A.D. British Museum, London

Portrait of Marcus Aurelius. Detail. Marble. A.D. 170s-180s. National Museum, Rome

Portrait of a Roman. Bronze. Last quarter of the 1st century B.C. The Hermitage, Leningrad

Initiation in the mysteries of Dionysus. Fragment of wall-painting at the Villa of Mysteries, Pompeii. C. 50 B.C.

Sarcophagus with Dionysian scenes. Marble. Early 3rd century A.D.









Sesterce. Aurihalk. Between  
A.D. 117-138

Sesterce. Aurihalk. C. A.D.  
119. Capitol Museum, Ro-  
me

Wall-painting from Villa  
Farnesi. C. 19 B.C. National  
Museum, Rome

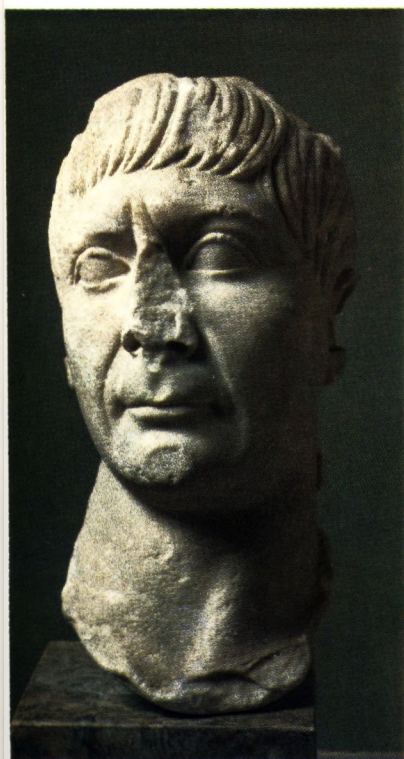
Portrait of Emperor Trajan.  
Marble. Early 2nd century  
A.D.

Head of a youth from Egypt.  
Marble. Mid-1st century  
A.D.

Roman city in Timgad, Al-  
geria. 2nd century A.D.



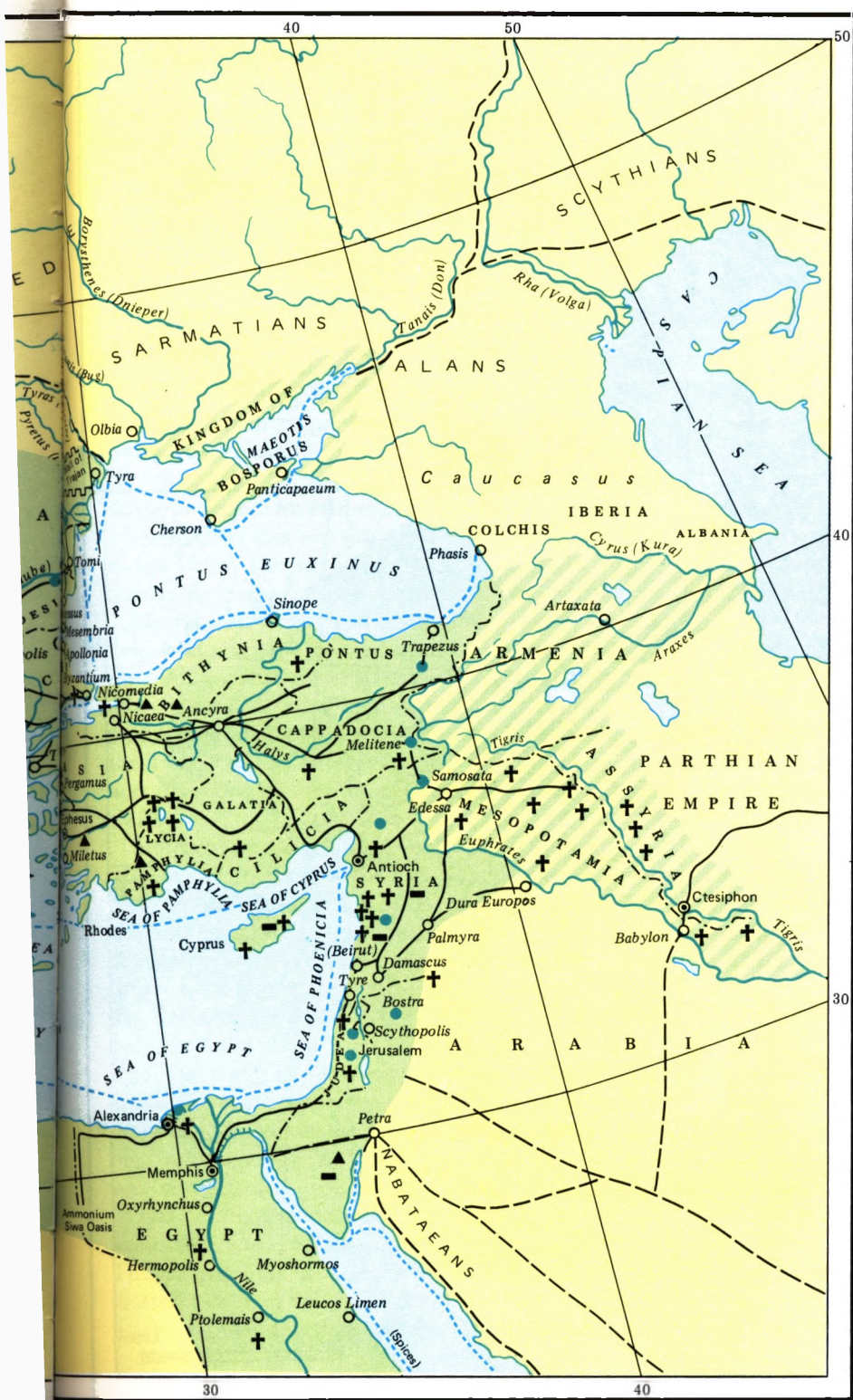


















ment, observation, and method, and that it had better refrain from unsubstantiated assertions. His works, however, could do little to stop the universal craze for the fantastic.

The romances of that time described the incredible adventures of incredibly beautiful and noble heroes and heroines going through terrible privations when captured by brigands, pirates, Persian satraps, overcoming all obstacles through their virtues and the assistance of the gods, and ultimately getting married. In the eyes of the people of those times, it was not outstanding political figures and military leaders striving for the glory of their country who were the greatest heroes but clairvoyant prophets always retaining their inner freedom and therefore towering head and shoulders above those who tried to subjugate them. The literary type of a noble outlaw also appeared at this time; he robbed the rich, and helped the poor, he was wise and virtuous despite his crimes, and met his death as befits a hero. All of this was a kind of "compensation", an escape from the reality with its humiliations and inevitable compromises with one's conscience.

Magic, astrology, and daemonology increasingly held sway over the people's minds. Lucius Apuleius, the author of the novel *Metamorphoses* describing the adventures of a young man transformed into an ass, paid a great deal of attention to magic, developing a theory of various categories and functions of genii and daemons mediating between the gods and the world.

Stoicism no longer appeared satisfactory either. The works of the last of the Stoics, the emperor Marcus Aurelius, are full of hopeless pessimism. He asserted that nothing in the world could be either changed or improved, all things had been, were, and would be the same through eternity. Baseness, flattery and falsehood would always exist. The glory of even the greatest of men was forgotten, and then, what use would glory be to them after death? In that chaos, the only important thing was to preserve the inner "I" and follow the path of virtue. But that virtue could no longer serve as a guideline in life, as it was not directed towards any goal.

The common people felt an increasing revulsion against the world of the rich and the powers that be. The propaganda of friendship between slave and master, rich man and poor man, could not shake the people's conviction that the rich and the strong who

posed as benefactors and friends of the poor and the weak were merely cunningly trying to divide and subjugate the little men, that the rich man was either a scoundrel himself or a scoundrel's heir, and that virtue did not live in stately mansions. The people opposed their own virtues—charity, good nature, industry, and readiness to help one another and forgive the enemy—to the official virtues of the ancestors included in imperial propaganda, and the virtues of philosophers based on knowledge.

In this period, Christianity began to spread. The personality of its founder and of his closest disciples, the dating of various Christian works, and the nature of diverse early sects and their doctrines are still the subject of controversy that has given rise to a vast literature. Whatever the solutions of these numerous problems, early Christianity was undoubtedly the best answer to the needs and aspirations of the common people. The destiny of Jesus Christ was a model of life and death that could be followed with greater conviction than the example of Hercules, Dionysus, Silvanus or Mithra, all of whom had lived in times long gone and probably never lived at all. The Christian author Lactantius wrote that Jesus appeared on this earth as a son of a carpenter and died the death of a slave in order that anyone, even the lowliest of the lowly and the poorest of the poor, might follow him. Christianity posed new goals, both general (the attainment of the Kingdom of God on earth) and individual (the attainment of eternal bliss in paradise). Christianity sanctioned breaking away from the official world, in which one had to live rendering to Caesar the things that were Caesar's but inwardly keeping at a distance from it and retaining one's spiritual freedom. Unlike many Oriental cults that became widespread in the empire, Christianity, far from endeavouring to become part of the imperial cult, resolutely rejected it. One Christian author wrote that Roman rulers, beginning with Romulus the fratricide, should have been forbidden to approach the temples for their evil deeds, let alone worship them. Early Christianity appealed to the poor and the simple; it proclaimed the slogan, "If any would not work, neither should he eat"; it rejected the rich and the noble with their "wisdom" and contempt for toil, and undermined the assumption of the inevitability of the existing order on which the whole of official Roman ideology was founded since the times of Augustus. At first,

Christianity spread among the lower urban classes, but gradually these were joined by other social strata. They brought with them their own philosophy, which coloured the doctrines of various Christian sects; they wrote treatises expounding the Christian faith and refuting Greek and Roman religions.

Christianity was becoming popular. After Nero's persecution the government sometimes punished individual Christians for refusal to participate in the imperial cult, and then at other times paid no attention to them, believing, as many contemporaries did (cf. e. g., the anti-Christian treatise written by Celsus), that Christianity was an absurd superstition of ignoramuses, a branch of Judaism despised by the Greeks and Romans. They failed to realise that the growing numbers of Christians were a dangerous sign of an impending crisis.

*The Crisis of the 3rd Century.* The crisis began in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161-180). In the 1st and 2nd centuries, the peoples living beyond the Danube and Rhine made, partly due to contacts with the empire, considerable progress in agriculture, crafts, and military art; forming tribal military confederacies, they began to attack the empire. After a war of attrition against Parthia, Marcus Aurelius had to fight, nearly during the whole of his reign, against the tribes of the Quadi and the Marcomanni on the Danube—a fight which on the whole ended in a draw. The plague epidemic, which carried away the emperor himself, and the financial burden of war adversely affected the empire's economy. In Egypt, where the peasants were especially harshly exploited, they ran away to the Nile Delta in their thousands and rose in rebellion that was known as the "herdsmen's revolt". In northern Italy and southern Gaul, the deserter Maternus raised a force of peasants and slaves that terrorised the landowners. Avidius Cassius, governor of Syria, rose against the emperor. All these were forerunners of much more terrible events.

Despite the Antonine tradition, Marcus Aurelius made his son Commodus heir to the throne, which caused grave discontent in the Senate and darkened the relations between the Senate and the new emperor, who was accused of abuse of power, cruelty, public appearances among gladiators fight-

ing in the arena (reminiscent of Nero's appearances as an actor), the omnipotence of his favourites, and of the humiliating peace treaty with the Germans, to whom he was now obliged to pay tribute. In 192 he was assassinated. He was succeeded by Pertinax, favoured by the Senate but soon also assassinated and replaced by Didius Julianus, who promised the praetorian guards more money than the other claimants to the throne; after a two-months reign, he was also killed.

A civil war began between the candidates for the imperial purple supported by different armies: Pescennius Niger, proclaimed emperor in the East; Clodius Albinus, supported by the nobility of Gaul and Spain; and African-born Septimius Severus, who was proclaimed emperor by the army on the Danube and defeated his rivals. His reign saw the beginning of a struggle, which lasted a whole century, between the so-called soldier emperors (who were favoured by the army and in their turn heaped privileges on it) and the emperors favoured by the Senate, who implemented its policies.

Although the senators believed that the situation was merely a reversal to the relations under the Julio-Claudian and Flavian lines, the basis of differences between the Senate and the emperors was now quite different. The Senate, mostly consisting of major landowners of the eastern and western provinces, wanted the emperors to carry out the policies that suited it best. The eastern potentates demanded a strong imperial power that would restrict both the freedom of the cities (only Rome must be a city, wrote Dio Cassius, senator and historian from the city Nicaea in Asia Minor) and the unruliness of the mob, relying on the *optimates*, i. e., the most wealthy and prominent citizens, the army and the state apparatus that had to be maintained at the public expense. Everyone was to receive obligatory education at state schools, where they would be taught to obey the emperor and to forget all about free thought. The western nobles wanted to have an emperor, elected by the Senate, who would merely act as a commander-in-chief and whose duty it would be to conquer new lands, get the manpower to cultivate those lands, maintain the army without burdening the population, and keep the soldiers in check. The emperor must not interfere in the internal affairs of the state, particularly those of the provinces, these nobles believed; these affairs would be



dealt with by the Senate and the local aristocracy. Freedom of thought and of cults must not be curtailed. The two factions had but one point in common: they both insisted that, far from confiscating lands, the emperor must hand over or sell his own lands to private individuals.

Relying mostly on the army, the soldier emperors also had some support from the urban population, often closely connected with the army, since veterans frequently settled in the cities while decurions served for a while in the army. These sections of the population also had a programme of their own, expounded in the work of Apuleius about Plato's theories and Philostratus's novel about the wise man and magician Apollonius of Tyana. That programme demanded a certain freedom for the cities and encouragement for the activities of the upper stratum of the urban population. The claims of the rich men had to be restrained, but the common people and demagogues also had to be firmly controlled. The emperor could name any of his sons successor to the throne (apparently to ensure their greater independence from the Senate), but he must not be a "tyrant". He had to have an army, but he also had to pursue a peaceful policy of conciliation and concessions.

Septimius Severus, and later his son and successor Antonine, nicknamed Caracalla, endeavoured to support the cities. They lavished special attention on the cities of Africa, partly because Africa was the native land of Septimius Severus, and partly because, with the impoverishment of Egypt, it became the principal supplier of grain for Rome. However, the policy of the Severi on this score was rather contradictory: while trying to maintain the cities as civic communities, they also increased the obligations of magistrates and decurions to the cities. Needing a lot of money, they demanded regular payment of revenue by the cities. Citizens now tried to avoid serving in the once honourary offices. Decurions were going to rack and ruin at an appalling rate.

As a result of confiscations of the property of nobles supporting Clodius Albinus and later opposing Septimius Severus, the emperor's lands grew manyfold, far outstripping in size the estates of the wealthiest individuals. Accordingly, the men who managed these lands played an ever increasing role, being in some provinces virtually uncontrolled. If

the colons settled on imperial lands refused to pay rent or obey the managers, the latter called in the troops. The agents of the imperial treasury had to report those who tried to evade paying taxes by concealing their incomes. In their attempts to introduce greater order in the administration of the empire, the Severi paid special attention to elaborating Roman law. The most prominent lawyers now served as praetorian prefects, edited imperial edicts, and wrote replies to petitions and pleas, as well as comments on the existing laws and rules for legal procedures.

During the reign of the first Severi, the last traces of equality among citizens disappeared. According to an edict of Caracalla, the entire population of the empire, with the exception of *dediticii* (freedmen guilty of grave misconduct during slavery or those who had fought against Rome as foreigners) received Roman citizenship. But the citizens were divided in the eyes of the law into the nobles (senators, equites, decurions) and the plebs, or the common people. No nobleman could be executed without the emperor's sanction, sentenced to corporal punishment or hard labour in the mines, but the common people were liable to all these indignities. The nobles' evidence had greater weight in court, and an insult to a noble was punished more severely. In general, punishment for various crimes became much harsher now, and reprisals were directed not only against the senatorial opposition but the empire's whole population. Not only mutiny or *lèse-majesté* were now punishable by death but also practising magic, divination involving the destiny of master or emperor, and spreading of new doctrines tempting the simple people. Surveillance of malcontents by secret agents, eavesdropping on conversations at taverns, bath-houses and other public facilities, which was not unknown already under the Antonines, was stepped up. Slaves could inform on their masters in cases of *lèse-majesté*, tax evasion or adultery.

The first Severi's main support was the army, which grew to 600,000 and was mostly recruited in the Danube provinces, where numerous independent peasantry still existed. In the other provinces, mostly veterans' sons joined the army. The soldiers' salary was increased, they were permitted to have families and own land, and they gradually turned into military settlers. Limitations on the social back-

ground of candidates for command posts were lifted, and any soldier could now hope to rise to the highest rank. Centurions were included in the equestrian order. Many posts in the bureaucratic apparatus were given to the military. The old praetorian guard was disbanded, and the new guard was recruited from the legionaries. In the provinces, small detachments of the so-called *beneficarii* were set up which acted as a police force, tracking down runaway slaves and fighting brigands whose numbers constantly swelled as slaves and impoverished peasants joined them. All these measures were intended by Septimius Severus to maintain order in the state and raise the army's effectiveness. The latter was all the more necessary as German tribes resumed their attacks against the empire, and relations with Parthia grew worse. Caracalla was killed during a campaign against Parthia, and the kaleidoscopic succession of "senatorial" and "soldier" emperors resumed. Of these, none died a natural death or reigned for more than a few years and even months. Two more emperors of the Severi dynasty ruled in Rome, both of them grand-nephews of Septimius Severus's wife, Julia Domna, who came from a noble Syrian priestly family. One of them, Elagabal, a hereditary high priest of the god Elah-Gabal worshipped in the city of Emesa in the shape of a black stone, was deposed for his attempts to impose that god's cult on Rome. To the Romans, the cult seemed absurd, and its ceremonies immoral. The other, Alexander Severus, appeared to be an ideal emperor in the eyes of the Senate—mostly because he tried to replace a standing army by irregular troops recruited locally, settled on estates on the empire's borders and provided with slaves and implements; practised the granting of state lands to senators; and restricted the independence of cities. The praetorian prefect under Alexander was Ulpian, the famous lawyer, who actually conducted all the affairs of state together with Julia Mamaea, the young emperor's mother. The self-enslavement of free adult Roman citizens was legally sanctioned in the interests of major landlords who needed more manpower. That was the end of the last immutable principle of the Roman civic community—the interdiction on the enslavement of a Roman citizen.

By the end of Alexander Severus's rule the economic situation of the empire also deteriorated. In their need for money, the government regularly

resorted to debasement of the coinage, adding copper to silver, and that resulted in inflation and price rises. Commanders and officials now received their salaries in kind, not in money. The amount of foodstuffs, clothing, jewelry, utensils, and the number of servants and concubines allotted to them were determined by their rank. The offensive of the German tribes intensified again. During one of the German campaigns, Alexander, his mother and Ulpian were murdered by mutinous soldiers (A.D. 235).

The troops proclaimed Maximin, nicknamed "The Thracian", as emperor. He is said to have been a simple Thracian shepherd before enlisting in Septimius Severus's army, in which he rose to the rank of tribune of a legion owing to his exceptional strength and bravery. Maximin carried out mass reprisals against major landlords, confiscating their lands, for which the Senate compared him to Spartacus and Athenion, but he had adherents not only in the army, which he led to victory over the Germans, but also in the cities. Owners of latifundia in southern Numidia rose against him, arming their slaves and colons and proclaiming Gordian, governor of Africa, as emperor. Gordian came from a noble family and had great wealth. He and his son were attacked by the legion stationed in Africa and the citizens of Carthage, and fell in ensuing battle. Simultaneously (in 238), the troops killed Maximin, and a compromise between the army and the Senate brought to the throne Gordian's grandson, who assumed the name Gordian III. He continued Alexander's policy, but in 242 he was also murdered by the troops.

The empire's position on the international scene also kept deteriorating. The Sassanid dynasty, which came to power in Iran, consolidated the army and the state and immediately started a war with Rome. The empire's frontiers were attacked by the Goths, Carpiens, Franks, Sarmatians, and Moors, which also began to form tribal confederacies headed by kings. Many of the provinces were devastated, many villas destroyed and looted. Emperor Decius fell in a war with the Goths on the Danube. Emperor Valerian (253-260) was taken prisoner by the Persian king Shapur—a disgrace that Rome had never known. The ruination reached its height under Gallienus (253-268), Valerian's son and joint ruler. Unlike his father, favoured by the Senate, he was, despite his noble origin, a "soldier" emperor. At the same time



he was a highly educated man; he endeavoured to restore the cities, and restrict the exactions imposed on colons, extending his patronage to cultural figures such as the philosopher Plotinus, founder of neo-Platonism. His predecessors Decius and Valerian, both supported by the Senate, had fought against the opposition among municipal circles, in which there were many Christians already, persecuting the Christians who refused to make sacrifices in imperial temples, banishing them and even executing some of them, especially the clerics, whereas Gallienus stopped the persecution of Christians, for which they were duly grateful. To spite the Senate, he barred the entry of senators to the army; neither could they be governors of provinces where troops were stationed. On the other hand, promotion from the ranks to the highest command posts was facilitated. The emperor reformed his cavalry, as mounted warriors were the principal force of the Germans, Sarmatians and Persians: he brought all the cavalry units under the command of one general, which increased the effectiveness of the Roman army. Gallienus was naturally hated most profoundly by the nobles, who inspired mutiny in many provinces. Usurpers appeared who tried either to seize the throne in Rome or to secede from the empire. In most provinces, the revolts did not last long, being quickly suppressed by troops loyal to Gallienus, but Gaul, Britain and Spain formed a separate Gallic empire headed by Postumus, a creature of the local landed aristocracy; he recruited Germans in his army. In the East, unable to resist the Persian onslaught, Gallienus was compelled to recognize Odaenathus, prince of Palmyra, as his joint ruler. Gathering Syrian and Arab troops, Odaenathus drove away Shapur who was laying Syria waste. But after Odaenathus's mysterious assassination, the anti-Roman party headed by his wife, the ambitious and wilful Zenobia, gained the upper hand. Zenobia was regent of Palmyra for Odaenathus's young sons; under her, Palmyra seceded from Rome and established sway over Syria, Arabia, a considerable portion of Asia Minor, and Egypt, where Zenobia was supported by a strong anti-Roman party. True, Gallienus won a number of victories over separate barbarian tribes, and concluded alliances with others, but the position of the empire still remained very difficult. In Africa, an uprising of peasants and colons broke out under the leadership of Faraxenes who

formed an alliance with the Moors. In Gaul, the revolt began of peasants who called themselves "Bagaudae", that is, "fighters". They seized villas and even captured the city of Augustodunum.

In 268, Gallienus was murdered by the cavalry commander Aureolus, but his military reforms bore fruit under his successors known as the "Illyrian emperors" (all of them came from the Danubian provinces)—Claudius II, Aurelian and Probus. Claudius II, nicknamed Gothicus, inflicted a severe defeat on the Goths, many of whom were made colons and military settlers. Tetricus, the last Gallic ruler and the richest landlord of Aquitania, frightened by the scope of the movement of the Bagaudae, and the disobedience of the troops stationed on the Rhine, secretly wrote a letter to Aurelian pleading for help and promising to surrender the army. In this way Gaul was restored to Rome. Aurelian also put an end to Zenobia's kingdom in the face of considerable opposition from anti-Roman and pro-Persian parties. Only Dacia was irrevocably lost. Probus won several victories over Franks, whereupon they were settled in the western provinces as soldiers and farmers.

By the 280s the position of the empire appeared to be improving, but the crisis was so acute that a recovery was no longer possible. During the times of general devastation, only the landed aristocracy thrived, seizing the lands of ruined petty and medium farmers, and making impoverished peasants, whole rural communities, and captives settled on land their colons. In the cities, many of which had been completely ruined, all power was concentrated in the hands of those who had managed to survive the period of devastation and even profit by it. The role of the slave-owning social structure in the economic life of the empire fell, while those structures in which the rudiments of future feudal relations were given free play were in the ascendant. The economic links between different parts of the empire grew weaker as natural economy became predominant and village communities and *saltus* almost unconnected with markets and cities. Separatist tendencies developed among provincial nobles, bringing about a revival of provincial cults, local languages, and local art. Under these conditions, the unity of the empire could clearly be preserved only through strong state authority. The emperors of the 3rd century made a decisive break

with the Antonines' policy. They assumed the titles of "lord and master", patronised Oriental solar cults tracing back the emperors' ancestry to the sun-god, ordered their sculptures to be erected, with diadems of sunrays, and insisted on the emperor's eternity and invincibility. A preamble to any speech now had to mention the "Golden Age" that set in with the coming of the current emperor.

This kind of official propaganda naturally lost all semblance of credibility. Previously popular doctrines now collapsed, and men more and more turned to religion rather than to philosophy, accepting divine revelations, as those of the Egyptian god Thoth, identified with the Greek god Hermes Trismegistos. It was believed that revelations, mysteries and magic formulas could enable the initiated to escape the action of this world's necessity and evil to the celestial spheres of genuine freedom. Many felt a repugnance to the real, material world. Various philosophico-religious schools emerged which, relying on Plato's ideas and the authority of the wise men of the Orient, taught that the earthly world had been created by an evil god but that the elect and enlightened could and should know a higher and true god by forsaking the world.

The numbers of Christians grew. Christian communities were now strong organisations headed by bishops who had treasuries at their disposal which swelled through donations from rich Christians. The bishops distributed alms only to the "worthy", that is, poor men obedient to them, and banished any dissenters, declaring them to be heretics. The works of Cyprian, a bishop of Carthage in the mid-3rd century, beheaded at the time of Valerian's persecutions, point to the replacement of the democratic spirit once prevalent in Christian communities by the bishop's iron will.

In that epoch, Plotinus called for the preservation of the surviving values of classical culture. He expounded the doctrine of world unity and harmony, and of the penetration of the supreme and integral Good (or the One) in all its parts. All the troubles of the world came from the fragmentation and disunion arising from unity becoming diversity through a series of intermediate stages. Man could only achieve harmony and happiness by looking deep into his own soul and purifying it, as a piece of gold, from the dirt of passions and desires adhering to it. He could even rise above reason by merging

with its unity and integrity. Plotinus recognized the need for "civic" virtues opening up the path to the higher virtues, and he also recognized the need for conscientiously performing one's role on the world scene. He believed that men did wrong to grumble at God who permitted evil to pervade the world, for they themselves were to blame for allowing the bad and the strong to rule them, rather than fight evil, for behaving like sheep allowing wolves to eat them. But these appeals of Plotinus to be active found no response. His disciple Porphyry mostly called for an escape from the world of vanity to a desert, to a life among the few pure and like-minded people far from the evil of life. The whole system of neo-Platonism was too abstruse for the broad public and later became the ideology of fairly narrow intellectual circles in some cities of the Orient.

Plotinus's esthetics had a much greater effect on the minds. It is not the external body that should be portrayed, he insisted, but the inner soul or idea. The art of those times lost interest in the reality, the beauty of the human body and man's individual traits, concentrating on representing a certain image or symbol of the inner essence. Only the enormous eyes contemplating eternity were alive in the portraits of the common people, while emperors' statues were intended to symbolise above all their grandeur, menacing, frozen, and oppressive.

*The Dominate and the Fall of the Empire.* Despite the gravity of the overall situation, some progress was made in the restoration of the empire on a new basis by the emperor Diocletian and his successor Constantine. Diocletian (284-305) was the son of a Dalmatian freedman, and he rose from a private soldier to the rank of commander of the imperial guard. After the assassination of the sons of the emperor Carus, Diocletian was proclaimed as emperor and implemented a number of important reforms. He divided the empire into four parts, making his comrade-in-arms Maximian his colleague, both of them bearing the title of Augustus, while Galerius and Constantius I Chlorus were nominated Caesars. The provinces were divided into smaller units, to increase the efficiency of the administration. To avert the danger of military pronunciamientos, the military authority of commanders was separated from the civilian authority of the governors. The army now



consisted of legions stationed along the borders and of mobile units easily transferred from one region to another. Barbarians settled on the provincial lands – Laeti and the *foederati* recruited among the allied tribes and also given lands in the empire served in the Roman army, too. Landowners were obliged to enlist part of their colons as soldiers. Veterans' sons also usually joined the army.

Land taxes were standardised and collected in kind. The taxes on state lands were higher than those on private estates. In accordance with an assessment of property, taxes were computed on the basis of a certain amount of land that could be cultivated by a single individual, the quality of land and the types of plants grown on it being taken into account. Responsibility for collecting taxes from city areas was now vested in members of municipal councils now called curials; in rural communities, the taxes were collected by the magistrates of *pagi* and villages, and in exempted *saltus*, by their owners. City merchants and craftsmen paid the taxes in money, while colleges delivered all kinds of produce in lieu of taxes. To fight inflation and high prices, Diocletian issued new coins and an edict on maximum prices – not only on grain, as had earlier been practised, but also on all agricultural produce and craftsmen's products, as well as various services. The edict proved unenforceable, and profiteering continued. The enormously swollen bureaucratic machine consisting of officials of numerous ranks was also streamlined, and new court ceremonies were introduced.

Diocletian made the final step to becoming a *dominus*, not a *princeps* (hence the name of the late empire, the *dominate*, as distinct from the early empire or *principate*). Diocletian adopted the divine surname of Jovius, the representative on earth of Jupiter, whereas Maximian became Herculus, the earthly counterpart of Hercules. The Christians, who opposed the idea of the emperors' divinity, were even more cruelly persecuted than before; many of them died in that period and were later included in the Christian martyrology. The subjects that had the rare honour of seeing their emperor had to prostrate themselves before him. Senators continued to be the highest order, but all state affairs were handled by the emperor's council, not the Senate. But the victories of Diocletian and his colleagues over the Germans, Persians, Moors and, which was the main thing, over movements of the Bagaudae and peas-

ants in Africa satisfied the nobles. The rebels were treated as common brigands and crucified on the spot without investigation or trial, or sold as slaves without the right of manumission. Ornate panegyrics praised Diocletian and Maximian as latterday Olympians triumphing over the giants – the rebellious "sons of the earth".

In 305, Diocletian abdicated and withdrew to his native Dalmatia, settling down in a magnificent mansion on the site of modern Split. After a short struggle between the pretenders to the throne, the son of Constantius Chlorus, Constantine (306-337) became emperor. He was the sole ruler of the empire but preserved its division into four prefectures subordinated to praetorian prefects and divided into provinces forming *dioceses*.

Constantine won special fame by stopping the persecution of Christians and convening the famous ecumenical council at Nicaea, which worked out a unified symbol of the creed thereby making Christianity a state religion. Constantine himself was baptised before his death, hoping, according to his ill-wishers, that the baptism would cleanse him of his numerous grave sins, especially the numerous executions (including those of nearly all his relations). The church now became a powerful ally of the state. As early as the end of the 2nd century, Tertullian, a prominent figure in the Christian church in Africa, wrote in his defence of Christianity against its adversaries that happiness, peace, charity and universal brotherhood would prevail in the empire if the emperor himself were to be a Christian. This dream, which had earlier seemed quite Utopian, had now come true, but that did not improve the position of either the empire's population or the Christian church itself. Having become a dominant religion and made numerous converts among self-seeking courtiers currying favour with the emperor, it immediately became the scene of fierce struggle among various trends (Nicaeans, Arians, Donatists, and others). Whenever one of these groups emerged victorious, it declared all the opponents to be heretics and used the power of the state machinery to repress them. The general councils that were convened to promote unity and concord actually only fanned the passions and arguments. Besides, the decisions of the councils were influenced by the emperor's will. Having rejected the imperial cult, the church sanctioned the idea of emperor as God's representative on earth.

Everything in any way connected with the emperor—his edicts, palace, bed chamber—were declared to be sacred. Disobedience in the face of imperial authority was regarded sacrilegious. Those who were disaffected by this degeneration of the church set up their own “heretical” sects and retired to deserts, starting various orders of monks, which gradually became more and more numerous. The church grew richer through donations from emperors and private individuals, and it now owned lands and colons. Elections of bishops were accompanied by intrigues and even massacres, as that post carried with it power, influence, and riches. At the same time Christian theology and philosophy developed; borrowing a great deal from the ideas of classical philosophy, they offered their interpretations and modes of solution of the same problems with which the former was concerned.

The internal situation in the empire remained tense. Constantine’s policy made the condition of the population even harder than it had been. Curials and their descendants were bound to reside in their cities, and if they left them, they were forcibly brought back. Later emperors regularly issued orders to seek out the curials, who had in the meantime become officials, crown colons, or even slaves of influential patrons, and send them back to their native cities. When arrears in city taxes accumulated, curials were thrown into prison and whipped. Craftsmen were hereditarily tied down to their colleges, and even marriages between different colleges were forbidden. The workers of crown workshops or factories were branded to make it easier to find them and return them to their workplaces if they ran away. Colons were bound to their plots, and runaway colons were sought out and returned to their owners in fetters, while those who offered them refuge were fined. The laws that improved the condition of slaves were repealed. If a slave should die after being beaten by the master, said an edict of Constantine, the latter was not responsible for the death as he had the right to reform a bad slave. A slave attempting to run away to barbarians had a foot cut off. Dog collars were fastened round slaves’ necks giving the master’s address, where they had to be taken by those who captured them to claim reward. A free woman forming a connection with a slave was burned alive, and a slave who informed on the woman was freed.

Having broken with all the Roman traditions, Constantine no longer wanted to stay in Rome where the senatorial nobility, true to those traditions, was still influential, and moved the capital to Constantinople founded on the site of Byzantium. The new capital symbolised a union of East and West. The transference of the capital to a more eastern location was a sign of the process often called the “Orientalisation of the empire” in scholarly literature. This is usually taken to mean the theocratisation of imperial authority and the establishment of a court etiquette similar to that of the Persian kings, but these were merely outward indications of deep internal processes. Having gone through the stage of a civic community with its characteristic features, Rome arrived, with the disintegration of that community, at a system close to that of the Oriental states, with their vast crown lands, estates of rich magnates, a population at different stages of dependence between slaves and freemen, and with undeveloped economic ties. The similarity of the socioeconomic structure was bound to produce a similarity in the outward form of state authority. But, as was often the case in Oriental states, that authority was fairly weak, despite all the external attributes of power. This became particularly clear under Constantine’s successors.

His reforms, which continued those of Diocletian, consolidated the position of the empire for a short time only. Of the later emperors the best-known was Julian nicknamed “The Apostate” (reigned 361-363). He tried to restore classical culture and religion, to lighten the burden of the people and improve the position of cities, but the crises did not abate and were even exacerbated. The army, which consisted of colons and ruined peasants, was losing its fighting efficiency. More and more often the recruits came from the barbarians settled on the lands of the empire or hired abroad. Their commanders’ influence at the imperial court grew, while the troops often failed to put up an effective resistance to their tribesmen that resumed their onslaught on the empire’s frontiers. True, the barbarians had not yet learnt to besiege fortified cities, but they devastated rural areas. They were often joined by peasants who rose to fight their oppressors. The Bagaudae fought in Gaul and Spain, and Christians of the Agonistic sect (which also meant “fighters”), in Africa. They seized villas, destroyed promissory notes, and raised slaves to the position of masters, making the latter



slaves. Their mood can be judged by the poems of Commodianus, a Christian poet born in Syria but resident in Africa who wrote in a language and style intended for the common people. He described in graphic verse the coming struggle of true Christians, the poor and the righteous, against Antichrist, and their triumph over the latter. He wrote that righteous men would march on Rome, destroying cities along the route and justly restoring to the people the riches stolen from them, that they would seize Rome, depose the emperor, and compel the Senate with the aid of the Goths to obey them. The nobles and the powers that be would become the slaves of their slaves, a thousand-year-long kingdom of peace and justice would come, and for a thousand years the enslaved oppressors would suffer for their sins. Sometimes the uprisings were headed by local descendants of tribal chiefs, like the Moor Firmus in Africa. It was never possible to stamp out these uprisings completely, and they flared up again and again.

In 378, the Goths settled on the Danube rose and, together with colons and gold miners, routed the army of emperor Valens (364-378), ruler of the eastern provinces. The emperor fell in battle. He was succeeded by Theodosius (379-395), who united the Eastern and Western empires under a single rule for the last time; resorting both to reprisals and compromises, he suppressed the uprisings, but the empire never got back on its feet. After Theodosius's death the division into the eastern and western parts became permanent, and the rulers of the latter became a plaything in the hands of the commanders of the hired troops of Germans. The discontent among the nobles of the Western provinces grew. By this time they had grown stronger than ever, raising forces of their own capable of defending their great fortified villas (the burghs) and of barring entrance to imperial officials; they saw the central government, incapable of stopping the onslaught of the barbarians and of suppressing peasant revolts, only as a dangerous usurper of their vast incomes. Time and again the Western magnates supported pretenders to the throne who often formed alliances with barbarian chieftains. On the other hand, all those who suffered from the enthrallment and abuses of the bureaucrats also pinned their hopes on the barbarians and ran away to them in their masses in search of more bearable conditions of life. Principali-

ties headed by local chieftains and actually independent from Rome emerged in the west. Armorica fell away from Rome, reverting to the primitive communal structure. The empire, grown exceedingly weak, easily fell a prey to the barbarians. In 410, Alaric, the chieftain of the Visigoths, seized and sacked Rome. True, the Goths later withdrew, but the fall of the "eternal city" left a shattering memory.

In the decades that followed, one Western province after another passed into the hands of the Goths, Burgundians, Langobards, Vandals, and Franks, who founded their kingdoms there. The chiefs of German troops planted and deposed Roman emperors who had no real power at all. In 476, Odoacer of the tribe of Scyrri deposed the last emperor Romulus, nicknamed Augustulus, and, without bothering even to appoint a new emperor, sent the insignia of imperial power to Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern empire, which lasted, under the name of Byzantium, for another thousand years.

The history of the Graeco-Roman world was over. The Middle Ages, the period of the formation of the feudal socioeconomic structure, began. The problem of the nature of the transition from classical slave-owning society to feudal is a subject of lively controversy. Was it an evolutionary or revolutionary transition? And if we have a revolution here, what were its specific features and its difference from bourgeois revolutions? What were the classes that carried out the revolution? What classes opposed them? And who were the carriers of the new relations? Had this transition been prepared by feudal relations that had matured within the empire, or did these relations emerge only after the fall of the empire out of a synthesis of the elements of the Roman and barbarian social structure? Why did the Western empire disintegrate while the Eastern one continued to exist? To what extent did the new societies that emerged on the ruins of the Roman empire retain the traditions, technical skills, types of settlement, and forms of social links and social relations of antiquity? Or could it be that only a few cities, which changed their nature, the Christian church, the Latin language, and the Roman law adapted to the new conditions were retained? These are the principal issues debated by modern historians, issues that have not so far been given generally acceptable solu-

tions. There can be no doubt, however, that Rome and the classical world as a whole exerted an enormous influence on the entire subsequent history and culture of mankind.

That influence was manifested in most diverse spheres of material and nonmaterial culture of the subsequent epochs, extending not only to the peoples that at one time formed part of the Graeco-Roman empires but also to those peoples that replaced them or inhabited the neighbouring countries—Germans, Slavs, Arabs, and others. The study of the influence, assimilation and transformation of the classical heritage in societies with different socioeconomic and political structures is of prime scientific significance for the study of the general problem of transition from one socioeconomic formation to another, of interaction between different cultures, of the possibility of cultural borrowings—a problem range that has a direct bearing on general historico-philosophical theories. Nearly all the founders of modern culturological theories, such as Spengler, Toynbee, Kroeber, and others, regarded Graeco-Roman culture or civilisation as a kind of standard for the emergence, development and decline of any culture or civilisation. But the main thing is that historians rejecting the concept of closed cultural cycles and accepting the basically different assumption of natural succession of social formations also see the great scientific significance of the classical world—not only as a social formation without the study of which the world-historical process as a whole cannot be understood but also because, owing to the distinctness of the stages passed by the antique world, it opens up great possibilities for comprehending the interaction of various socioeconomic, political and cultural processes. Although this interaction assumes specific forms under concrete historical conditions, it is also governed by general historico-cultural and sociological laws of development.

All down the centuries, the Graeco-Roman world and its culture constantly attracted the attention of philosophers, writers, and artists. For the broadest public, the antique images, figures and heroes often served as models to be imitated or, on the other hand, to be criticised. Suffice it to remember the treatment of Caesar, Brutus and Cassius in world literature and historiography: they appeared now as tyrant and his assassins, the liberators (as, e. g., during the French Revolution), now as an almost ideal

ruler and his criminal murderers placed by Dante in the last circle of hell. The replacement of the Roman republic by empire has been variously described as a beneficent transition from the rule of hidebound aristocracy to a “democratic monarchy” (thus Mommsen) and as a sad demise of freedom trodden down by tyranny.

In the modern times, the ideas of freedom and democracy have been often associated with classical models. As the Soviet student of antiquity S. L. Utchenko aptly put it, therein lies a certain “phenomenon of the antique polis”. The classical civic community was not a democracy in the modern sense either in Greece or in Rome. Only a limited number of full-fledged citizens had access to the popular assembly and the magistracies. The possibilities for the free expression of citizens’ will were extremely limited, particularly in Rome. The principle of “geometric” equality based on property qualification does not correspond to the modern ideas of civic equality, and neither does the concept of freedom as primarily economic independence, limited in actual fact by working for other men. Still, despite these and other essential differences, fighters for freedom and democracy in the modern times drew upon the idealised concepts of Athenian democracy and the Roman republic. The same is largely true of the idea of the harmoniously developed man, the idea of *humanitas*—respect for man’s bodily and spiritual qualities. This idea, so dear to the thinkers of the modern times, was also traced back to antiquity, although in actual fact the Graeco-Roman world interpreted “man” as “citizen”, and a sufficiently well-to-do and educated citizen at that, a citizen of a leading community, for citizens of allied and subjugated communities (not to mention the barbarians) were not seen as full-fledged citizens and were often enslaved. Still, it was precisely in antiquity that the ideal of man and of human relations was sought for.

The ideas of democracy, freedom and humanity, albeit modified in accordance with new notions and conditions, constituted an important part of the common cultural heritage of the whole mankind.

The ideas of early Christianity, which took shape in the framework of the Roman empire, continued to inspire the exploited people in their fight for social justice during the Middle Ages and in the modern times. Roman law, which worked out in greatest



detail all types of contractual relations and legal suits, formed the basis of the law of many European countries, and later affected the legal systems of other continents. Classical science, though different in its methods and potential from modern science, in many respects formed the basis of the latter. Alexandrian mathematicians came very close to creating algebra, which was later worked out by the Arabs. The heliocentric systems, which preceded Ptolemy's geocentric system, gave an impetus to the studies of Copernicus. Archimedes's law and Euclidean geometry are still alive today. Classical philosophy, closely linked with science, often posed the same questions as the philosophy of the modern times; it was not only a monument of antique thought but also a basis for the development of many branches of modern philosophy. The atomistic theory of Lucretius and his brilliant hypotheses concerning the history of the world and of mankind nourished the thinking of the materialists of the modern times; the logic of Aristotle, the science of formal logic; and the dialectics of classical philosophers, the modern dialectical method. Significant in this respect is the profound interest for the attainments of classical philosophy displayed by many outstanding philosophers

and thinkers including Marx, Engels, and Lenin.

The interest for human psychology and realistic portrayal of the world made a great impact on the art of the modern times—both the visual arts and drama. Modern playwrights appreciate the composition and the subjects of antique tragedies and comedies, and antique characters gain a new lease of life in these times, as writers turn to the images of Antigone, Phaedra, Medea, or Orestes, linking them up with present-day ideas and quests and giving them a contemporary colouring. The character of a cunning and clever slave became the prototype of the servants in the plays by Lope de Vega, Goldoni, and Molière.

Western Europe mostly became acquainted with classical culture through its Roman interpretation, whereas Russia and Eastern Europe perceived it through the mediation of the Byzantine empire, where Greek traditions were always retained. Whatever the differences between the structure and worldview of the modern world and those of antiquity, the history of modern culture cannot be understood without the study of our Graeco-Roman heritage and the ways in which it was assimilated under various historical conditions.

The ancient civilisations of East and West are a most important chapter in the history of human society. It was in that remote epoch, preceded by a long period of the formation of Man as a biological species and the development of the first human collectives, of culture and social relations, that the foundations of subsequent evolution were laid which largely determined the nature and course of the historical process. It was a time of great achievements in material culture (agriculture, livestock-breeding, metallurgy, the crafts), which were the source of a further growth of productive forces, and made a decisive impact on the subsequent evolution of society's socioeconomic structure and progress in spiritual culture. It was then that classes and the state emerged, as well as cities, writing, science, philosophy, and it was then that art received a fundamentally new impetus.

It is not coincidental that the ancient civilisations of East and West are presented in this work in a general context of historico-cultural development and made a subject-matter of scientific study. This reflects both the historical reality itself and the authors' view of the history of mankind and of the unity of the historical process.

Characteristic of the epoch of antiquity both in the West and in the East was the transition from the first, preclass socioeconomic formation—the primitive communal, to the first class one, the slave-owning formation, although the forms and character of social development in the East and in the West differed. The degree of the development of slave-owning and its specific features in the ancient Orient were also different from those of the Graeco-Roman

world (in the latter, slave-owning assumed its classical form). In both regions, the feudal structure began to take shape at the concluding stages of the period of antiquity, later developing into a new socioeconomic formation.

East and West have for a long time been regarded as opposing entities by historians and the general public alike. In the modern time the opposition between East and West was used by historians to substantiate the proposition that the two followed different paths of historical development. This view was rooted in an inadequate and often superficial knowledge European scholars had of the history and culture of the Orient—the available stock of Eastern sources was rather limited at the time. All too often Western scholars proceeded from the assumption of Europocentrism, regarding the “European materials”, the ancient history of the countries of the West, as the standard and frame of reference for assessing social and cultural phenomena of non-European communities. These unscientific theories were actively propagated by adherents of colonial policies.

In opposing the West to the East, Western politicians and public and cultural figures variously appraised Oriental civilisations, but these appraisals, by and large, followed two principal trends—belittling the cultural achievements of the East, emphasis on its backwardness and inability to “rise” to the level of the West, and exaggerated praise for the “Oriental models” and for the “spirituality” of the East. Even major European philosophers accepted the interconnected propositions concerning the “spirituality” of the East and the “materialism” of the West, the “rational and active” in the West



and the "sensual and passive" in the East, the "progress" of the West and the "stagnation" of the East. Hegel's division of all peoples into historical (Greeks, Romans, the Christian peoples of Europe) and non-historical ones (the peoples of the East) also found a great many supporters. Kipling's line, "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet", has been a familiar catchword for decades in Europe. This was also the established attitude of Western science to ancient civilisations.

While accepting the specificity of the paths of development and the diversity of societies and cultures of that epoch, modern science must, in our opinion, proceed from the assumption of the unity of the historical process, and thus reject the opposition of the ancient East and the ancient West. The Oriental bias, characteristic of some works of Asian scholars, is based on a diametrically opposed but essentially just as unhistorical conception. Fresh historical data show quite clearly the unscientific nature of such positions.

The studies of the recent decades prove conclusively that the "ancient Orient" must be taken to mean not only a certain chronological and geographical framework but also a definite stage in the historical development of ancient societies. Typologically, the early societies of the Aegean world and of the northern Mediterranean have a greater affinity to the early Oriental than to the Graeco-Roman ones. The Scythian states of the northern Black Sea coast must also be included in the early Oriental type. In other words, the ancient East becomes less and less the East pure and simple.

A similar statement may be made about the West. Consider, for instance, Roman Egypt, or a whole series of other synthetic cultures, in which the line between the East and the West is hard to draw. The view that the ancient countries of East and West were isolated from each other—an opinion rather similar to the approach outlined above—must certainly be revised. The data now available to scholars demonstrate that the peoples and tribes of East and West had close contacts already in very ancient times, and these contacts were beneficent for their respective material and nonmaterial cultures. These varied mutual links continued throughout the period of antiquity, and, since civilisation took shape much earlier in the East than in the West, the latter benefited from these contacts much more than the

former. Moreover, it may even be said that Greek culture could not have achieved such a high level of development without the contribution of the ancient Orient. We know, for instance, that the Greek system of writing was derived from the Phoenician script, that some kinds of cultivated plants and domestic animals were borrowed from the East or became widespread under the influence of the Orient, that science of the ancient East made a great impact on Greek science, and so on and so forth. Oriental material culture greatly influenced not only the peoples of Greece and Italy but also of other regions of Europe, which borrowed millet and rye, for example, from the Near East and the Caucasus. Citric plants and melons also came to Europe from Asia. The ancient Orient also made a sizable contribution to the development of metallurgy and metalwork in Europe.

For a long time, the concept of ancient East included only the so-called countries of the classical Orient—Egypt, Mesopotamia, Iran, Palestine, and Phoenicia. The archaeological discoveries of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and finds of new written monuments made scientists extend this conventional geographical framework to include the ancient cultures of Anatolia and the Caucasus as typically Oriental ones. In the recent decades, the ancient Oriental areal became even more extensive covering India, China, as well as Arabia and certain areas of South-East Asia.

In recent years, the chronological boundary of the concept of ancient Orient was pushed back, owing to fresh archaeological discoveries, to the 9th or 8th millennium B. C., not the 5th or the 4th, as had earlier been believed.

Links between distant areas were established not only directly but also in relay fashion, as was the case of connections between the ancient cultures of Europe and the Far East. Archaeological data point to permanent rather than sporadic contacts covering in the 8th through 3rd centuries B. C. the huge distance of up to 7,000 kilometres—we refer here to the Old Silk Route described above. It led from the Balkan peninsula and the Northern Black Sea coast to Ordos, crossing the Urals, the Altai Mts and Tuva. Goods and objects of art travelled along the Silk Route from China to the Mediterranean. This unity of the ancient civilisations of different peoples was preserved and even consolidated after the appear-

ance of the Western Graeco-Roman civilisations on the historical scene. Greeks and Romans got as far as India and China, there were Indian trading colonies in Iran and Egypt, and Roman factories in southern India.

The periods of Hellenism and the Roman empire were extremely important for the establishment of links between East and West. A kind of synthesis of cultures was taking shape—not as a sum of heterogeneous elements (Eastern and Western ones) but as an organic whole, as a novel and original phenomenon (cf. Graeco-Bactrian and Gandhara art, the Kushan pantheon, Alexandrian science, Fayum painting, etc.).

Throughout the period of antiquity, the links between Eastern and Western civilisations covered extremely diverse spheres—commercial, cultural, scientific, etc. The attitude towards the East in the classical world varied from epoch to epoch and was often hostile, especially during the Graeco-Persian wars, when the East was seen as alien and barbarian. But real life, the historico-cultural process itself, pushed the ancient civilisations towards each other, as they followed an objective and natural path of development.

The period of the crisis of Roman society and its culture was an extraordinary chapter in the history of the relations between the Graeco-Roman world and the East. At that time, the East, and in the first place Iran with its learning of the Magi and India with its religion and philosophy of Brahmanism, were perceived as a source of wisdom and high ideals that might help to find a way out of a spiritual crisis, rather than as something backward or alien.

In considering the ancient civilisations of the West, it would be wrong to exaggerate the integral quality of the whole of the Graeco-Roman world, seeing it as a phenomenon given once and for all. Indeed, Mycenaean Greece, Athens of the times of Pericles, the epochs of Alexander and of the Roman empire represent different social institutions, cultural levels and ideological forms. Evolution was not always progress, there were periods of stagnation and even temporary regress, but the “spirals of history” ineluctably drew classical society to a new level and to types of social development that were progressive from the historical standpoint. The history of ancient civilisations offers an instance of development that was described by Lenin as “a de-

velopment that repeats, as it were, stages that have already been passed, but repeats them in a different way, on a higher basis (‘the negation of negation’), a development, so to speak, that proceeds in spirals, not in a straight line”.<sup>1</sup>

Owing to the continuity of experiences and mutual links, the ancient civilisations of East and West entered the Middle Ages carrying a rich cultural heritage. As historical fate would have it, a great deal of that cultural heritage was not perceived by the subsequent generations—much was destroyed and dissipated. Only in some Oriental countries (such as India and China) was a certain continuity of culture and tradition preserved in the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages; Byzantium and the Arab world directly absorbed a great deal from the classical and Oriental cultures. Contemporary archaeological, historical and linguistic studies restore to life, as it were, many monuments of the ancient civilisations of East and West, filling in the gaps in their overall historico-cultural development. Each discovery on this path strengthens the exceptional importance of these ancient epochs in the history of humankind and the formation of world culture.

Here we would like to mention the great contribution made by Soviet specialists in the ancient civilisations of the East and the West to the study of their history and culture. We can list here only some of the recent works, such as S. L. Utchenko, *Julius Caesar* (Moscow, 1976); V. M. Masson, *The Economy and Social Structure of Ancient Societies* (Moscow, 1976); Ye. M. Shtayerman, *Ancient Rome. Problems of Economic Development* (Moscow, 1978); G. A. Koshelenko, *The Greek Polis in the Hellenistic East* (Moscow, 1979); Yu. Ya. Perepelkin, *The Revolution of Amen-Hotla IV*, Vols. 1-2 (Moscow, 1979-1984); B. G. Gafurov and D. I. Tsibukidis, *Alexander of Macedon and the East* (Moscow, 1980); M. A. Dandamayev and V. G. Lukonin, *The Culture and Economy of Ancient Iran* (Moscow, 1980); I. D. Rozhansky, *Classical Science* (Moscow, 1980); E. D. Frolov, *The Torch of Prometheus. Essays on Antique Social Thought* (Leningrad, 1981); V. G. Ardzinba, *The Rituals and Myths of Ancient Anatolia* (Moscow, 1982); *A History of the Ancient World*, Vols. 1-3

<sup>1</sup> V. I. Lenin, “Karl Marx”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 21, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1978, p. 54.



(Moscow, 1982); I. Sh. Shifman, *Ugarite Society of the 14th and 13th Centuries B.C.* (Moscow, 1982); B. B. Piotrovsky, *Wadi Allaki, the Path to the Gold Mines of Nubia* (Moscow, 1983); I. D. Amusin, *The Qumran Community* (Moscow, 1983); I. L. Mayak, *Rome under the First Kings. The Genesis of the Roman Polis* (Moscow, 1983); *Classical Greece*. Ed. by Ye. S. Golubtsova, L. P. Marinovich, A. I. Pavlovskaya and E. D. Frolov, Vols. 1, 2 (Moscow, 1983); *A History of the Ancient Orient. The Birth of Ancient Class Societies and the First Fountainheads of the Slaveowning Civilisation*, P. 1. Mesopotamia. Ed. by I. M. Dyakonov (Moscow, 1983); I. S. Klochkov, *Babylon's Nonmaterial Culture. Man, Destiny, Time* (Moscow, 1983); E. M. Yanshina, *The Formation and Development of Old Chinese Mythology* (Moscow, 1984); T. V. Gamkrelidze and V. V. Ivanov, *The Indo-European Language and the Indo-Europeans*, Vols. 1, 2 (Tbilisi, 1984); *The Earliest States of the Caucasus and Central Asia* (Moscow, 1985); *The Culture of Ancient Rome*. Ed. by Ye. S. Golubtsova. Vol. 1 (Moscow, 1985), Vol. 2 (Moscow, 1986); G. M. Bongard-Levin and G. F. Ilyin, *India in Ancient Times* (Moscow, 1985); M. A. Dandamayev, *The Political History of the Achaemenid Empire* (Moscow, 1985).

Well-known throughout the world are the works of Soviet historians and philologists specialising in the history and culture of the Orient—B. A. Turayev, S. F. Oldenburg, V. V. Struve, M. A. Korostovtsev, F. I. Shcherbatskoy, T. V. Gamkrelidze (all members of the USSR Academy of Sciences); G. A. Melikishvili, member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences; M. Ye. Masson, member of the Turkmenian Academy of Sciences; Professors V. K. Shileiko, I. M. Dyakonov, V. A. Livshits; major specialists on Greece and Rome such as Academicians S. A. Zhebelev and A. I. Tyumenev; Professors I. I. Tolstoy, N. A. Mashkin, V. S. Sergeyev, S. I. Kovalev, P. F. Preobrazhensky, A. B. Ranovich, S. L. Utchenko, V. F. Gaidukevich, and others. It was owing to intense studies by Soviet archaeologists and historians that the original civilisations of the Caucasus and Central Asia, as well as most interesting monuments of Graeco-Roman culture in the Black Sea region, were discovered and studied and certain chapters in the chronicled history of the peoples of these regions were read for the first time. Of considerable scientific significance is the research that Soviet archaeologists

did abroad (in Yemen, Afghanistan, Iraq, Mongolia, and other countries).

There is a long-established view in historiography that practically all progress in ancient cultures was achieved in the world of sedentary farmers and craftsmen, while their neighbours, the livestock-raising nomads, were seen as a destructive force whose raids devastated everything that had been created by the agricultural population. Modern research shows, however, that these nomadic peoples made a considerable contribution to human culture, with their conquest of the vast open spaces of the steppe and deserts and their culture adapted to the conditions, often of extreme hardship, under which they lived. Modern research has also shown that farmers and their nomadic neighbours could not, in fact, exist without each other, since exchange of their respective produce was a most important element of the economic system of antiquity.

The earliest class societies have yet another specific feature of great significance. Slave-owning states, whether Western or Eastern, never occupied the whole of mankind's oikoumenē. Slave-owning societies were always surrounded by numerous barbarian peoples still at the primitive-communal stage of development. Some researchers believe even that the existence and evolution of slave-owning society is in principle impossible without this primitive environment, since the barbarian outlying regions were the main source of slave labour.

The dynamics of relations between the zone occupied by slave-owning peoples and that of primitive peoples is contradictory. The former largely develops at the expense of the latter. Inequitable trade, alienation of natural resources demanded by the growing slave-owning economic system, and enslavement of the population were only some of the modes of exploitation of primitive societies by slave-owning states. In objective terms, however, direct or indirect invasion by class societies of the zone in which primitive-communal relations still prevailed promoted historical development of these peoples. Traditional links were destroyed, social differentiation accelerated, and the upper stratum of the population often consolidated its dominant position by acting as an organiser of the fight against the rapacious neighbour. It frequently happened that barbarian peoples tipped the balance of force in their favour.

However that may be, we must always bear in mind that the foundation of the remarkable ancient cultures was built not only by the peoples with which their efflorescence is primarily connected but also by thousands and even millions of nameless workers torn by the force of historical necessity from their native hearths and thrown into quarries, workshops, and on slave-owning farms (villas). Modern research has shown that many of the famous Athenian vase-painters were slaves and aliens in Athens; Aesop, the renowned fabulist, was a Phrygian slave, as was the outstanding philosopher Epictetus. Spartacus, the unforgettable leader of rebellious slaves, was a Thracian.

Some technological discoveries made in the ancient world, such as wheeled vehicles, calendar, compass, paper, glass, glaze, coins, etc., still benefit mankind. Along with these achievements in material culture, one must just mention monuments of Oriental culture such as the Gilgamesh epic, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana*, *The Book of Odes*, or *Shihching*, Kalidasa's dramas, *Historical Memoirs* by Ssuma Ch'ien the architectural complexes of Persepolis, Egyptian and Kushan sculpture, the philosophical doctrines of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism, and so on.

The Graeco-Roman world gave us the remarkable gifts of monuments of literature, poetry, sculpture and painting, of philosophical and scientific thought—Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the comedies of Aristophanes, the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the poetry of Horace and Ovid, the logic and philosophy of Aristotle, the atomistics of Democritus and dialectics of Lucretius, the medical methods of Hippocrates, the sculptures of Praxiteles, the wisdom of Socrates and Plato, Cicero's oratory, and a great deal else. The men of the Renaissance and of the modern times often turned to the characters and plots of antiquity; the classical ideas of democracy and freedom inspired the men of the French Revolution, just as the scientific achievements of the Greeks inspired the founders of present-day science.

Unfortunately, we know very little (let us stress it again) about the true creators of material wealth—about the ordinary working people; just as fragmen-

tary, however, is our knowledge of the creators of nonmaterial culture, those who wrote ancient poetry, solved the first and most difficult mathematical problems, and created masterpieces of painting and sculpture. Their names may never be known, but humankind must, and will, always gratefully remember these nameless creators, those who built cities and dams, made pottery, melted metals, producing the works of material and nonmaterial culture of which we are justly proud even in these days.

Problems of the cultural heritage of the peoples of East and West are not only of academic interest at present—they often become burning political issues debated by the broad public holding varying and often opposed views. The interest for the remote past of one's country is quite natural, but the approach to these chapters of history must be objective, without any bias, modernistic revision, or any ideas of national exclusiveness.

Cicero wrote that history is the teacher of life. The history of the past historical epochs, even as far removed from the present as those considered in this book, may be quite instructive. Consider, for instance, the problem of ecology, so vitally important today. Man had to face his first ecological problem already in the Palaeolithic, when he hunted down to extinction animals that provided his means of subsistence. Or take Italy of the period of the Roman empire, when several centuries of uncontrolled, predatory exploitation of soil fertility (which was treated much like slave labour) caused a disaster on quite a large scale. And what about the forests of Greece, the disappearance of which was bemoaned already by Plato?

The ancient civilisations of East and West are not just the history of remote epochs but also part of our modern material and nonmaterial culture. We turn to these chapters of the historical past not only to enjoy the masterpieces of world art and literature and study their profound humanist message. The lessons of the past must also serve peace and progress—the most noble goals of the modern times, they must serve the cause of the moral upbringing of those who are only beginning to study the heritage of the ancient civilisations of East and West.



A

Abayev, V. I.—103  
 Achthoes—44, 50  
 Aeneas—267, 269, 271, 288, 289, 309, 310  
 Aeschylus—215, 223, 224, 336  
 Aiti—186  
 Ajatashatru—152  
 Alcibiades—220, 221  
 Alexander the Great—96, 100, 125, 127, 128, 140, 145, 152, 153, 233-238, 241, 245, 252, 258, 259, 261, 283, 334  
 Alkaios—212  
 Alyattes—83, 117  
 Amenhotep IV (Akhenaton or Ikhnaton)—41, 45, 49, 51, 80  
 Anaxagoras—225  
 Anaximander—211  
 Anaximenes—211  
 Andragoras—132, 141  
 Antigonos—237-241  
 Antiochus I—140, 242, 243  
 Antiochus III ("The Great")—95, 141, 155, 244, 250-252, 254, 255, 283, 286  
 Antipater—234, 237, 238, 260  
 Antoninus, Pius—317  
 Antony, Mark—95, 100, 133, 256, 302, 302  
 Apelles—232  
 Apollodorus—223, 261, 304-306  
 Apries—47, 48, 69  
 Apuleius, Lucius—318, 321, 323  
 Archilochus—212  
 Archimedes of Syracuse—245, 258, 331  
 Ardys—83  
 Aristides—216  
 Aristophanes—220, 224, 225, 336  
 Aristotle—205, 230, 231, 234, 259, 262, 274, 331, 336  
 Arrian—152  
 Arshak (Arsaces)—132, 141, 244  
 Artaxerxes I—125, 126

Artaxerxes II—95, 126, 127  
 Artaxerxes III—127  
 Aryabhata—169  
 Ashoka—141, 153, 154  
 Ashvaghosha—167  
 Assurbanipal—47, 54, 65, 67, 74, 83, 93  
 Astyages—69, 117-119  
 Atheas—108, 110  
 Augustus, Gaius Julius Octavianus (Octavian)—170, 256, 304-311, 313, 314, 318, 321, 326  
 Aurelian—325  
 Aurelius, Marcus—170, 317, 321, 322

B

Berosos—55, 56, 78, 261  
 Bhamaha—167  
 Bimbasara—152  
 Bindusara—153  
 Blavatsky, V. D.—16  
 Botta, Paul Emile—54  
 Brasidas—220  
 Brutus, Junius—274, 275, 303-305, 310, 316, 330  
 Bryaxis—232, 316, 330  
 Buddha (Siddhartha Gautama)—163-165, 167, 168

C

Caesar, Gaius Julius—256, 274, 292, 298-305, 307, 308, 310, 312, 313, 321, 330  
 Caligula (Gaius Caesar)—312  
 Callippus—232  
 Callisthenes—234, 261  
 Cambyes I—47, 48, 114, 117, 118  
 Cambyes II—47, 48, 120-122, 129  
 Caracalla, Marcus Aurelius Antonius—323, 324  
 Carter, Howard—41  
 Cassander—238-240

Catiline (Lucius Sergius Catilina)—298, 299, 301  
 Cato—284, 285, 289, 290, 294, 297, 299, 302, 316  
 Catullus, Gaius Valerius—301  
 Chadwick, James—197  
 Champollion, Jean François—40  
 Chandragupta—153, 156, 167  
 Chang Chiao—190  
 Chang Heng—191  
 Charondas—206  
 Cheops—43, 50  
 Ch'in Shihhuangti—182, 183  
 Chuangtzu—179  
 Ch'ü Yüan—181, 192  
 Cicero, Marcus Tullius—237, 290, 292, 293, 296-305, 307, 316, 336  
 Cidenas (Kidinnu)—78  
 Cinna, Lusius Cornelius—295, 298  
 Cleisthenes—208, 219  
 Cleitus—232  
 Cleomenes III—249, 261, 262  
 Cleon—220  
 Confucius (Kung-tzu)—178, 179, 193  
 Constantine—326-328  
 Crassus, Marcus Licinius—95, 132, 133, 297-299, 302, 313  
 Croesus—83, 119, 120  
 Ctesias—121  
 Cyaxares—68, 117  
 Cyrus I—118  
 Cyrus II—48, 69, 118-122, 126, 129-131, 139  
 Cyrus the Younger—114, 126, 228

D

Darius I—95, 108, 114, 121-124, 128-131, 139, 215  
 Darius III—127, 128, 233, 234  
 Darwin, Charles Robert—20

David-86  
 Demetrius Poliorcetes-141, 155, 239, 240, 245, 246  
 Democritus-165, 225, 262, 336  
 Demosthenes-220, 226, 230, 232  
 Dinostratus-232  
 Diocletian-326-328  
 Diodorus Siculus-104, 110, 237, 261, 263, 310  
 Drako-206  
 Droysen, Johann Gustav-236  
 Dyakonov, I. M.-12, 114, 335

## E

Empedocles-225  
 Engels, Frederick-9, 11, 17, 196, 232, 331  
 Epaminondas-229  
 Epicurus-262  
 Eudoxus-232  
 Eumenes-237-239  
 Euripides-133, 223, 224, 229, 336  
 Evans, Sir Arthur John-197, 198

## F

Fan Shēnchih-191  
 Finley, M. D.-279  
 Firdausi Shāhnāma-131

## G

Galen-170, 318  
 Gallienus (Publius Licinius Egnatius)-324, 325  
 Gandhi, Mahatma-164  
 Golenishchev, V. S.-12  
 Gorgias  
 Gracchus, Gaius Sempronius-291, 292, 301, 315  
 Gracchus, Tiberius Sempronius-291, 301, 315  
 Grotefend, Georg Friedrich-54

## H

Hadrian-170, 257, 317, 320  
 Hammurapi-55, 59-62, 71, 115  
 Han Feitzu-180  
 Hannibal-250, 251, 283, 284  
 Hatshepsut-45  
 Hattusili I-80  
 Hattusili II-46  
 Heraclitus-179, 225  
 Herodotus-42, 78, 86, 97, 102-104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 114, 118, 120, 121, 225, 226  
 Hesiod-81, 204  
 Hippocrates-170, 226, 336  
 Hippodamus-245

Homer-96, 166, 201, 212, 259, 336  
 Horace-187, 300, 309, 310, 336  
 Hsiaokung-181, 182  
 Hsüntzu-178, 180  
 Hyperides-226

## I

Isocrates-231, 232

## J

Jones, William-147  
 Julian ("The Apostate")-328  
 Justin-114, 237  
 Juvenal-312

## K

Kalidasa-166, 167, 336  
 Kanishka-143, 156  
 Knorozov, V.-150  
 Korostovtsev, M. A.-12, 335  
 Kuang Wuti-186, 187  
 Kuzishchin, V. I.-314

## L

Layard, Sir Austen Henry-54  
 Lenin, V. I.-17, 331, 334  
 Leochares-232  
 Leonidas-124, 215  
 Lepidus, Aemilius-296, 305, 307  
 Leucippus-225  
 Liehtzu-179  
 Liu Pang-183, 184, 190  
 Livshits, V. A.-114, 132, 335  
 Livy (Titus Livius)-310  
 Lucilius-289  
 Lucretius Carus, Titus-191, 300, 331, 336  
 Licullus, Lucius Licinius-296, 297-299  
 Lugalzagesi-56-58, 75  
 Lycurgus-231, 249  
 Lysander-221, 228  
 Lysias-231  
 Lyssippus-232, 261

## M

Mani-135  
 Marius, Gaius-292-296, 298, 301  
 Marx, Karl Heinrich-17, 213, 331  
 Mashkin, N. A.-16, 335  
 Masson, V. M.-17, 149, 334, 335  
 Mazdak-135  
 Memnon-233  
 Menaechmus-232  
 Menander-260, 265  
 Menes-41, 42

Mengtzu-178  
 Midas-82  
 Minayev, I. P.-147  
 Mithridates VI-95, 99, 255, 295-298  
 Mo Ti (Motzu)-179, 180  
 Myron-222, 223

## N

Nabonidus-69, 70, 121  
 Nabopolassar-67, 68  
 Nagarjuna-158, 165, 169  
 Naram-Sin-58  
 Nebuchadnezzar I-63, 68, 69, 77, 121  
 Nebuchadnezzar II-54, 86, 117  
 Necho-47, 68, 85, 128  
 Nefertiti-51  
 Nehru, Jawaharlal-164  
 Nero, Tiberius Claudius-96, 305, 312, 313, 322  
 Nicolet, Claude-274

## O

Odoacer-329  
 Okladnikov, A. P.-25  
 Oldenburg, S. F.-147, 335  
 Ovid (Publius Ovidius Naso)-309, 310, 336

## P

Pan Ku-187, 192  
 Pan Piao-192  
 Parrot André-55  
 Pausanias-232, 237  
 Peisistratus-208, 212  
 Pelopidas-229  
 Pericles-218-22, 222, 334  
 Pheidias-222, 223  
 Philip II-98, 110, 127, 229, 230, 232-234, 237-239  
 Pindar-223  
 Piotrovsky, B. B.-12, 17, 89, 93  
 Plato-178, 227, 230, 262, 323, 326, 336  
 Plautus, Titus Maccius-265, 288, 289  
 Pliny the Elder-78, 187, 264, 268, 275, 297, 315  
 Plotinus-325, 326  
 Plutarch-153, 216, 237, 269, 316, 318  
 Polemarchos-232  
 Polybius-118, 155, 237, 250, 261, 262, 265, 284, 288  
 Polyclitus-222, 223  
 Polygnotus-223  
 Pompey (Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus)-256, 296, 297-303  
 Porus-234  
 Praxiteles-232, 261, 336  
 Prinsep, James-154  
 Protagoras-225



Psammetichus I-47, 67, 83, 120  
Ptolemy I-187, 192, 237-241, 245, 261,  
263  
Pyrrhus-240, 242, 278, 280  
Pythagoras-211, 290

## R

Ramses I-45  
Ramses II-41, 45, 46, 80  
Rassam, Hormuzd-54, 74  
Rostovtzeff, Michael-16, 236  
Roxana-140, 234, 237, 239  
Rusa I-67, 92, 93, 116

## S

Sammu-ramat-66  
Samudragupta-156, 157  
Sappho-212  
Sargon I-57, 58, 61  
Sargon II-54, 64, 67, 82, 92, 93, 115,  
116  
Saul-86  
Schliemann, Heinrich-199  
Scopas-232, 261  
Seleucus I-140, 153, 238-242  
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus-306, 312, 313,  
315, 316, 320  
Sennacherib-64, 65, 67  
Servius Tullius-273, 274, 294, 304  
Severus, Lucius Septimius-322-324  
Shalmaneser III-66, 90  
Shang Yang-180-182  
Shapur I-134, 135, 156, 324, 325  
Suppiluliumas I-62, 79, 80  
Sneferu-43, 48

Socrates-225, 230, 336  
Solomon-86  
Solon-207, 208, 214  
Sophocles-223, 224, 336  
Spitamenes-234  
Spartacus-297, 324, 336  
Ssuma Ch'ien-185, 192, 336  
Strabo-78, 99, 100, 155, 237, 259, 297,  
310  
Struve, V. V.-12, 48, 335  
Sulla, Lucius Cornelius-132, 292, 293-  
298, 301, 302  
Sung Yü-181

## T

Tabarna-79  
Tacitus-311, 316, 320  
Tagor, Rabindranath-164  
Takhos-127  
Tarquinius Superbus-273-275  
Telepinush I-80  
Terence-265, 288, 289  
Thales-211  
Themistocles-125, 215  
Theognis-206, 212  
Thucydides-114, 225  
Tiberius-311-313, 316  
Tiglath-pileser I-63, 90  
Tiglath-pileser III-64, 66, 92, 93, 116  
Timotheus-232  
Tolstov S. P.-137  
Trajan-96, 100, 156, 170, 314, 317, 318,  
320  
Trogus, Pompeius-114, 237  
Turayev, B. A.-12, 335  
Tutankhamen-41, 45, 80  
Tuthmosis I-45, 51

Tuthmosis III-41, 45, 46  
Tyrtaeus-212

## U

Udayin-152  
Ur-Nammu-58, 59  
Uruinimgina-56  
Utchenko, S. L.-16, 306, 330, 334, 335

## V

Vasco da Gama-85  
Ventris, Michael-197  
Virgil-187, 309, 310  
Vipper, R. Yu.-16

## W

Wang Mang-186, 187, 193  
Wheeler, Mortimer-150  
Winckler, Hugo-79  
Woolley, Leonard-55  
Wuti-183-186, 192, 193  
Wuwang-174

## X

Xenophon-114, 121, 126, 178  
Xerxes-124, 125, 131, 215

## Y

Yang Chu-180, 181

## Z

Zaleukos-206  
Zedekiah-68, 69  
Zoroaster (Zarathustra)-130, 139

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